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HENRY HARLAND: EXPATRIATE

by Albert Parry

At the dawn of his London success, Henry Harland, that strange upstart American, editor of the *Yellow Book*, jestingly complained in a private letter: "Compared to the wonderful premature infants who are my contemporaries and associates in the *Y. B.*—compared to the Aubrey Beardsleys and the Max Beerbohms—I am a very monument of antiquity. They treat 1880 as mediaeval; and I (alack the day!) was born in 1861."

In spite of the bantering tone, Harland was really worried. He was in constant fear of growing old without achieving much. He was unhappy that the young Beardsleys and Beerbohms were considered more brilliant than he, and that to them went the greatest share of the *Yellow Book* fame, notwithstanding his own hard labours editing the magazine. He felt that his lowly American origin was held against him. He tried to romanticize it by his brazen lies that though of American origin he was really born in St. Petersburg. He was not original in this invention, for Whistler had claimed the Russian capital as his birthplace before him. But Harland went further. He hinted that his blue eyes and his pallor testified to some Russian blood in him, that he was a love-child of high and irregular origin, that the Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph had shown a parental interest in him. He made up fluent stories of his childhood in France, of preparation for the priesthood in the Irish College in Rome, of the cardinal's hat that he could have won before he was thirty.

But, after all, as one of his heroines said in *My Friend Prospero*, "It is so nice of you to be English". So Harland tried to claim an English baronetcy. He said that he really came from the good sturdy seafaring folks, the Harlands of Sprague Hall or Sproughton, Suffolk county, and that Admiral Harland was one of his great-grandsires. By 1740 (said the American editor of the London literary sensation) a son of the Admiral sailed for New Orleans where he soon made a fortune and a fine name for himself as a silversmith and jeweler. His offspring moved to Connecticut, and though they were the

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rightful heirs to the Admiral's baronetcy, the title went to the silversmith's younger brother. In the 1840's the last Lord Harland died, and now the Connecticut Harlands could claim the title once more, but (Henry Harland sadly shook his pointed beard) the law of Connecticut forbade them to become English lords on pain of losing their property.

And then again Henry would nervously play with his eye-glasses and assure his listeners that he and the other Connecticut Harlands sprang from the first pilgrims—from John Alden and Priscilla Mullins, hero and heroine of the Longfellow poem. He would proclaim his pride of Norwich, Connecticut. He called that town "not only the rose of New England, but the rose of the world". He asserted that symbolically speaking Norwich was his birthplace, for were it a matter of his own choice he would have been born there and not in St. Petersburg.

These endless fantasies of Henry Harland are very bewildering, and it is with some difficulty that historical truth is extracted from under the mountain of his inventions. It is the fact that Henry Harland was born in New York, on March 1, 1861, of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Harland of Norwich, Connecticut. Tom Harland was at the time a young chap only a few years out of Yale, where he had continued his boyhood friendship with Edmund Clarence Stedman, the future Wall Street poet. At the end of the fifties Stedman was trying his first fortunes in New York, and Tom came to play chess with him and pester him with all sorts of literary schemes. Tom had an enormous head of queer shape and was known as a clever mathematician. He also tried law and at one time was Collector of Internal Revenue. Evidently Tom meant to serve as promoter and waited on Stedman to produce editorial brilliancy. But nothing came of these schemes.

Both were interested in Fourierism, which Albert Brisbane (our Arthur's father) was then energetically importing from Europe, and in co-operative ideas of the kind Edward Underhill was boosting. But even here the two friends from Norwich did not always agree. At one time Stedman resolutely wrote to his father that he was learning to unlearn from Tom Harland. However, both of them moved into Underhill's first co-operative house on Fourteenth Street, full of clerks, reporters, writers, and many queer and nondescript men trying to effect a commune. It was called the Unitary Home, and Tom Harland was made its manager.

When Henry was born, Stedman became his godfather. Little Henry was reared in an atmosphere of literary Bohemianism mixed with the latest humanity-saving currents from Europe and Stedman's stock quotations from Wall Street. He was taken on picnics to the Fourieristic Phalanx at Strawberry Farms, New Jersey, and to the funerals of those writers who died of their Civil War wounds. It was a mixed childhood, with another element added when Tom Harland became interested in Jews, and little Henry received a quota of Jewish playmates for his own. Distinguished Jews were interested in Tom and his Henry. It was said that Felix Adler, of Ethical Culture, was one of Henry's first teachers. In his early teens Henry wanted to be a doctor; his maternal grandmother was one of the first women doctors in America. Later he wanted to be a Protestant minister. But Stedman and Adler diverted his attention to literature.

Through his years in City College and during his unfinished studies at Harvard young Henry tried to write short stories, essays, and novels, but he noted with naïve amazement that plots and descriptions so exquisitely formed in his heated mind never

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managed to reproduce themselves on paper. He could not finish a single *chef d'œuvre* he set out to write. He complained to Stedman, and the godfather undertook to help him. He criticized Henry's work, he made him tear up his crude compositions, he egged him on to more perseverance, and finally he advised him to give up writing for a time and travel. Acquaintance with the European scene and the foreign masters would do young Henry good. Henry was enthusiastic about the idea. He was twenty-one, and his youngish father treated him as an equal. Tom scraped together some money for his son, perhaps mortgaging his new house in Beekman Place, and with a slender suit-case in his nervous hand Henry sailed away.

He was gone for about a year, but he managed to pack a lot of experiences—or were his later accounts no more than daydreams? —into that period of time. He reported that during that year he studied at Cambridge, experiencing again his desire to enter the ministry, frolicked at the University of Paris and in the Latin Quarter, and hobnobbed with the most aristocratic families of Rome and Southern Italy. He said that he wrote travel sketches for the New York *Tribune* and contributed articles, translated by an Italian friend, to the Italian press. He related to his friends his encounters with English, French, and Italian ladies of beauty and mystery, and he was so sincere and romantic that many of his myths were believed. In 1883 he returned to New York and entered the Surrogate's office as a clerk. For he had to make a living.

II

Stedman's sermons were beginning to have their effect on young Henry Harland. He could now make himself finish whatever piece of writing he began. He also found in himself strength to revise and polish what he wrote. He sold his first short story to a newspaper syndicate and girded himself for his first novel. Jewish New York would be a good locale to write about. Henry thought he knew the ghetto, for Beekman Place was part of it. The ghetto was practically a new field, increasingly influential in the life of the city, but untouched by American writers. The eighties rolled on, an era of early settlement houses, of fervent reform and uplift, and of serious social-minded slumming. The period caught the romantic imagination of Henry, and he became a martyr to it. After slaving in the office all day and then bolting his supper, he would go to bed, setting his alarm clock for two o'clock in the morning. From two o'clock to breakfast time he would write his stories of Jewish life, bestirring himself with wet towels and black coffee. After breakfast he would go to his long hours in the Surrogate's office. This went on day after day and night after night, with the regularity of a well-oiled automaton. As he said, it was with Balzacian severity that he treated himself. But he had his eye on profits as well as art. Into his first novel, *As It Was Written, A Jewish Musician's Story,* he introduced a strong mystery murder mixed with love and the supernatural. For originality he inserted a bit of musical score in the narrative, as well as God's name in Hebrew type. To supply intellectuality he padded his thriller with discourses on art. He praised Jews lavishly, saying that thanks to the presence of the Jews New York was the most picturesque city in the world. He made one of his Gentile heroes exclaim:—

> I should be proud of my lineage, were I a Jew. . . . I believe the whole future of America depends upon the Jews. The future Americans, thanks to the Jew in them, will have passions,

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enthusiasms. They will paint great pictures, compose great music, write great poems, be capable of great heroism.

But somehow Harland was loth to sign his name to these thrills and prophecies. He invented the Russian-Jewish pseudonym of Sidney Luska and showed his work to Stedman. The poet-broker liked the book and took it to Cassell's publishing company, commending it highly. In 1885, when the book was published, Stedman reviewed it in the romantic manner in which the book was written, saying: "Its intensity, picturesqueness and exciting narration are in sharp contrast with the works of our analytic novelists." Other reviewers followed the lead, and the public bought the book. The Jews in particular were flattered by its reception. Soon the identity of the author was disclosed, but the rumour spread that Henry Harland was really a Jew or of Jewish descent. Henry liked the monetary receipts and the romantic rumours. After three long years of office drudgery he gave up filing other people's wills and sported around the town, cultivating his young pointed beard until, indeed, it made him look like a Jew of artistic type. He dined in Jewish homes and was invited to lecture before Jewish societies.

Shortly before the publication of his first book Henry Harland fell in love earnestly enough to want to marry. Aline Merriam became his wife—half-French, half-American, with literary tastes and acquaintances and with a grandfather who was said to have been an Immortal of the French Academy. Stedman waxed joyous at his protégé's choice. He called her "the paragon of lovely and clever womanhood", and as the years went by he found in her "wondrous added perfection, motion, look". In 1886, with money from *As It Was Written*, the young couple took a trip to Europe. Aline introduced Henry to some of the literary ladies she knew in Paris, and Henry wrote enthusiastically to Stedman of meeting Madame Blanc, who had praised Stedman in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. Madame Blanc and her contemporaries were enthusiastic about Henry and Aline; everybody was comfortable and happy. Meanwhile, Henry set out to write other thrillers to add to the sum of his new success, fortune, and happiness.

In 1886 he published *Mrs. Peixada*, a year later *The Yoke of the Thorah*, and in 1888 *My Uncle Florimond* and *Mr. Sonnenschein's Inheritance*. Like his first novel, they were stories of Jewish life in New York, with a few more mysterious murders thrown in, and with some humorous touches added. Henry Harland was determined to work this literary bonanza to its last vein. The last vein was really struck with *The Yoke of the Thorah*, for in it he showed his impatience with the Jews for not living up to his ideal. He had said in his earlier work that the Jews were destined to add a tonic of rich, strong wine to the American blood, to give the race fire and flavour. Now, still writing under the name of Sidney Luska, he urged intermarriage and chided the Jews for their aversion to mixed unions. Henry pictured an Elias Bacharach dying for the love of a Christine Redwood from whom he was separated by the cruel yoke of the Thorah. He wrote that even those Jews who professed advanced ideas shrank from intermarriage and caused the perdition of the few daring Bacharachs.

The Yoke of the Thorah caused a flurry and sold well. The Anglo-Jewish magazines published angry articles on Henry's views of intermarriage. They now belaboured him for his earlier works as well, because he had pictured Jews as humorous or uncouth char-

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acters, as usurers, and as murderers. The Jewish critics said that Harland did not know Jews. His Jewish friends were now bitter toward him. Some of them, however, were willing to listen to his explanations, and an exciting evening was arranged in one of the synagogues of New York. Henry Harland came out with a speech eloquent and to the point. He said that his best friends were Jews, that he wrote about good Jews as well as bad ones, that he meant no offence to the race when he invited it to intermarry, and that after all he did not insist on intermarriage if the Jews did not wish it. The large assemblage may not have been convinced, but on the whole it was pleased by the very fact of Henry's appearance and near-apology in a synagogue.

A victory was conceded to Henry Harland, but he began to brood. He looked back on his work and thought it lurid and sensational. He called it a bad dream. He pined for more exquisite things, far withdrawn from sordid realities. But just then William Dean Howells began to praise the future creator of the *Yellow Book* for a certain tendency to realism which he found in Henry's early work. Howells wrote in *Harpers Magazine* about *Mrs. Peixada*: "It is a pleasure to recognize its fresh ground, its unworn *personnel*, its generous passion, its vivid incident, and the strong young *go* of the whole affair." In this as well as in other books of Henry's early years, it was the new, foreign, teeming East Side, from Beekman Place to Tompkins Square, that Howells liked the most. He urged Henry to go on with realistic pictures of life as he saw it, and Henry wrote an autobiographical novel, *Grandison Mather*, wherein he provided realism by parading E. C. Stedman as "Everett St. Marc" and his own Aline Merriam as "Rose Cartret". In the same year Cassell & Co. published his *A Latin Quarter Courtship* (printed earlier in *Lippincott's* as *A Land of Love*). Howells went into raptures over its suggestions of realism, but Stedman was enraged, calling it a false step and blaming Howells for his bad influence. Stedman insisted to Howells that Henry Harland was inherently and incurably romantic, and attempts at realism would surely wreck his career. He spluttered at him: "It's all right for you, but I think it is a bad thing for Harland."

Caught in the current of conflicting exhortations and tired of arguments, Harland sailed again for Europe. The year was 1889. It marked the beginning of a real expatriation. From then until his death sixteen years later, he lived and worked in Europe, turning his stooping back upon America completely, except for one short visit in the winter of 1903.

III

Shortly before Henry Harland finally became a European, the London *Athenæum* had remarked in a review of *Grandison Mather* that its author deserved to be better known in England. Harland perhaps construed this statement as an invitation to move to England; it may well have been only on the strength of this review that he impulsively took up his residence in Cromwell Road.

He quickly and easily made friends with the *literati* of London—at first with the more obscure, the hacks, the unrecognized. But soon he met Henry James, Edmund Gosse and other brahmins. "Sidney Luska" was dead, and Henry Harland hated to be reminded of him. He wrote now under his own name. When there was no escape, Harland spoke scornfully of his earlier work. Presently the critics ceased to admire it and fell in with the author's own curious underestimation of it. They, too, began to say

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that Sidney Luska wrote lurid and cheap stuff. Harland now tried to win fame for his own name by sugary and lacy novels and short stories of English aristocracy, Italian landscapes, French loves. Between the beginning of the decade and the birth of the *Yellow Book* he published four books, *Two Women or One?, Two Voices, Mea Culpa,* and *Mademoiselle Miss.* They were noticed and praised and bought, but not as extravagantly as his stories of New York Jewish life.

To add to Henry's troubles, the fogs and chills of London proved dangerous to his lungs, pronounced by eminent doctors to be extremely weak. In the early nineties the best lung specialists of London and Paris told him that he was dying of consumption. Henry, with his romantic, semi-gay, semi-sad zest for life was both incredulous and proud. He eagerly spread the rumour of his fate. He cursed London weather and sought frequent refuge in Paris. Soon he was falling madly in love with the French capital. But how could he stay in Paris when he was not a celebrity and was not admired by the international throng of the Latin Quarter? Harland was downcast. He became complaining, bitter, apologetic. On May 1, 1893, Henry James wrote to Edmund Gosse:—

> Poor Harland came and spent two or three hours with me the other afternoon—at a café-front and on chairs in the Champs-Elysées. He looked better than the time previous, but not well; and I am afraid things are not too well *with* him. One would like to help him—and I try to—in talk; but he is not too helpable, for there is a chasm too deep to bridge, I fear, in the pitfall of his literary longings unaccompanied by the *faculty*.

Other celebrities of the time sided with Henry James rather than with Stedman and Howells in the appraisal of Harland's work, when they noticed it at all. American and English publishers, being a shrewd lot, also sized up Henry's writing as second-rate in spite of its being profitable. It was—and remains—a surprise that John Lane chose Harland, and not someone else of more "faculty", to lead the English intelligentsia of the *fin-de-siècle* out of its propriety and boredom. It has been suggested that in 1894, on a memorable tipsy February night, John Lane named Henry Harland the editor of his proposed daring review because Harland happened to be in that night's crowd of *literati* and stood out by his restless behaviour. In any case the choice was surprising.

It was, however, just the thing for Harland's enthusiasm. He took the proposal seriously. He actually created and ran a magazine that soon was the sensation of the time. True, it was merely his good fortune that the time and scene were most opportune for a review of art for art's sake, of French gaiety and symbolism injected into a city growing tired of Victorian sobriety. But it was his merit that he was such an excellent and tireless manager, knowing exactly where and how to get stories, verse, and drawings in that rococo style which was his weakness and the rage of the time. Since his own literary talents were reputed to be of rather mediocre quality, all the faults of the *Yellow Book* were currently and subsequently blamed on him, and all the credit given to Beardsley and others. Even Henry James, essentially a stranger to that gay group, got out of the *Yellow Book* more advantage and praise than Harland, the true mainstay of the magazine.

When the *Yellow Book* and Harland were dead Henry James was kind and even lyrical in his remembrance of them. He said that the *Yellow Book* afforded Harland "perhaps his most beguiling dream and most re-

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warding hours". He said that "the thing had been to him, for the few years, a humorous uneasy care . . . yet . . . he had adventurously lived, wrought and enjoyed, the small lemon-coloured quarterly, 'failure' and all. . . ." When Harland brought the project of the *Yellow Book* to him, James was amused and charmed by it on the spot, or at least by "the touchingly convinced and inflamed projector". On the whole, James concedes the charm and the positive influence of the *Yellow Book*. "It was the happy fortune of the late Henry Harland to charge everything he touched, whether in life or in literature with that influence." But when both the magazine and its editor were still alive, James wrote of them most disparagingly—not for publication. On May 28, 1894, he said in a letter to his brother William:

> I haven't sent you the *Yellow Book*—on purpose. . . . I say on purpose because although my little tale which ushers it in ("The Death of the Lion") appears to have had, for a thing of mine, an unusual success, I hate too much the horrid aspect and company of the whole publication. And yet I am again to be ultimately, conspicuously associated with the 2nd number. It is for gold and to oblige the worshipful Harland. . . .

What was this horrid aspect of the *Yellow Book* that annoyed its most celebrated contributor, however inwardly, and excited the open admiration and frank wrath of other contemporaries? In vain do we look for horrors in the thirteen yellow volumes. To us they appear tame, and on the whole rather pretentious. We see among the contributors, especially in earlier numbers, such distinguished names as Henry James, Richard Le Gallienne, Max Beerbohm, Norman Hapgood, Arthur Symons, Edmund Gosse, George Moore, H. G. Wells, Arnold Bennett, Aubrey Beardsley, Joseph Pennell, Will Rothenstein, George Gissing. But in their work—if we exclude Beardsley's—there was nothing to shock the good public. Beardsley's drawings, indeed, smacked of a morbid eroticism which was more irritating than exciting, but we now know how carefully John Lane went over these drawings for any real indecencies that the young art editor might try to smuggle in, and how some of Beardsley's drawings were snatched by Lane almost out of the press. That the British newspapers appeared to be shocked by the *Yellow Book* Harland explained by the jealousy of certain gentlemen of the press; he suggested that many of the newspaper attacks came about because he "had perhaps declined offers of 'copy' from some of their enterprising young men".

In the minds of many Americans, the *Yellow Book* was synonymous with the Wilde spirit, but the fact was that Oscar Wilde nursed an intense dislike for the magazine—perhaps he felt that contributors aped him—and never wrote for it. The news-stories reported that when Wilde was arrested for immorality he had the *Yellow Book* under his arm. Later, it was corrected to *a* yellow book. But the harm was already done, and John Lane was subjected to many unpleasantries in America, where the news of the Wilde trial reached him.

True, Harland liked to imagine himself a wild Bohemian and a rakish woman-fancier. He was proud of the premature streak of grey in his black disordered hair. He wore his hair longer than any of his Paris and London friends. He paraded the goatee and the gesticulating habits that made him seem more French than any of his French acquaintances. He emphasized his preoccupation with style and his preference for pyjamas as his writing garb at home. He tried to look and sound unconventional at the Bodleian editorial offices of Lane. In his rooms in

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Cromwell Road he arranged literary dinners, after which he would sit on the floor and mete out your-eyes-remind-me-of-the-moon-rising-over-the-jungle compliments to the women. He said that he abhorred sentimentality and that he fled from Marie Corelli as from the measles. But the fact remained that a real sin shocked him. He could not stomach the Murgerish love affairs and the hashish habit of Ernest Dowson in Soho. He winced, trying not to show it, when English and French poets and artists boasted in his presence of their entanglements with married women. In his stories appearing regularly in the *Yellow Book* and collected into two volumes (*Grey Roses,* 1895, and *Comedies and Errors,* 1898) there was not the least suggestion of indecency.

He disliked Beardsley's eroticism and early fame, and perhaps secretly gloated over his expulsion from the *Yellow Book* following the Wilde scandal. Now Harland ruled over the magazine supremely, but he was always suspicious of artists. Jestingly he wrote in his magazine that in a literary review there should be no place for pictures: "They don't hang sonnets and stories between the paintings at the Royal Academy". It was really more than a jest on Harland's part. Now that he was unhampered by Beardsley's fame he thought the magazine was much better, but Arthur Symons justly observed that by the summer of 1895 the *Yellow Book* "ceased to mark a movement, and had come to be little more than a publisher's magazine". For Henry Harland was at his core a stolid middle class intellectual and did not know how to *épater le bourgeois* sincerely and effectively.

IV

In April, 1897, the last issue of the *Yellow Book* left the press, and Harland was an editor no more. But he was not heartbroken. Indeed Henry James wrote that Harland "was never more amused (nor . . . more amusing) than when, after no very long prolonged career, it [the *Yellow Book*] encountered suddenly and all distressfully its term". Harland felt strengthened by his three years at the Bodley Head. He had met celebrities on almost an equal footing; nay, some of them even curried favours from him. He was drawn by Beardsley and caricatured by Beerbohm. In New York, the editor of THE BOOKMAN frantically implored Harland's friends and relatives for his photograph. In 1899 Stedman wrote proudly of his pupil: "Next to Henry James, he has as good a style as any man in London, and it was remarkable that he should have founded the *Yellow Book* there with all its merits and defects, and gathered under his wing most of the bright literary chickens of that New Jerusalem."

But with his new strength and celebrity Harland still felt the need of paying homage to his elders. He now divided his allegiance between Stedman and James. He insisted to Stedman that he owed everything to his early guidance, and he sang praises of James in every letter and conversation. James was embarrassed. He felt that he must reciprocate in kind, however reservedly. In 1898 James graciously reviewed *Comedies and Errors.* The review was long, perhaps the better to mask its forced character. James called Harland's style a "romantic and tender voice". He cautiously pointed out that Harland was "just yet . . . a little too much everywhere, a trifle astray", and that there was "excess . . . of his wit". He noted that Harland wrote of anything but America, and he seized the opportunity to defend the idea of writing away from the native soil. But he no doubt resented the frequent remarks of the critics that in Harland's short stories one could see James's influence. He considered

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Harland's writing too weak to enjoy the rôle of being Harland's teacher. But Harland shone with happiness. He went to see *Guy Domville* twice and wrote about it in triumph as if the play were written by him and not by James.

He said he valued James because he was "the only master of considered prose". He tried to emulate him by pondering long over every word he wrote, not for its meaning but for its beauty. He considered the rhythm of his prose rather than its substance. He employed the trick of repetition to evoke tears of sadness in his readers. These are typical sentences: "What had he done or won? Nothing, nothing." " 'Pulped-pulped; pulped-pulped.' The hateful word beat rhythmically again and again in his tired brain." He remembered Howells's earlier admonition to touch hearts rather than to shake nerves. To achieve this he forsook the ghastly murders of his early Jewish pawnbrokers for melancholy and beautiful suicides of Italian maidens and young English lords in London, fatal duels of Russian princes, sad funerals of Latin Quarter denizens. Often he discarded even these. He sacrificed plots to what he thought were exquisite psychological studies of cosmopolitan characters. He emulated French symbolism, Oscar Wilde's epigrammatic flow, James's social grace and short-story technique, and he imbued it all with his own peculiar brand of gay melancholy. He loved to achieve such sentences as: "Life is a chance to make mistakes", or "In the Courts of Memory, Mirth and Melancholy wander hand in hand." He told his readers that life was sad, ah so sad, and yet beautiful, oh so beautiful!

Remembering his Luska period, critics said that his was a dual personality. But there was really a deep similarity in his Jewish-life stories of the eighties and his exalted cosmopolitan and Latin Quarter fiction of the nineties. Both in the ghetto and in the Quarter he saw the same romantic exoticism, the same sentimental heart-throbs. The Jewish women of New York and the *Bohémiennes* and the princesses of Europe were beautiful, mysterious, sad, and pale with "the pallor of a luminous white soul" to exactly the same degree.

His love for Paris grew until it became an obsession. Come, come here, oh do come! he wrote from Paris cafés to any one who ventured to correspond with him. He swore somewhat too loudly that Paris was the most enchanting spot in the universe. "Why doesn't everyone live in Paris?" He coaxed and ballyhooed in his letters of invitation: "We have Paris, beautiful, gay, colourful, suggestive, exhilarating Paris!" Gradually he came to include Italy in his sphere of enthusiasm. He went to Italy frequently because of his weak lungs. His condition was considered serious, and now at last he began to believe his doctors. With death facing him, he became mystical; he sought solace in chats with Catholic priests; he shaved his moustache and beard, exposing his somewhat receding chin. Catholicism was fashionable among the English and French poets and artists. Many of them became converts—it was so sad, so beautiful, so well-bred. He who once was so interested in Judaism, he who once planned to be a Protestant minister, now became a pious but still urbane and witty Catholic.

V

The Cardinal's Snuff-Box, his first novel after nine years and his first best-seller of very large profits, was the result of this conversion. It was published in 1900 and took both England and America by storm. It told of the graceful conversion to Catholicism of an English writer, thanks to the combined

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efforts of an Anglo-Italian noblewoman and a most enlightened and sympathetic Italian cardinal. Again Harland packed frothy dialogue, melancholy description, witty epigrams, and beautiful women into a slight plot, but now to a new and unique purpose. More than ever before, in this book Harland caught the tide of public interest. It was the time when the Anglo-Saxon reading public was interested in the sad romances of the nobility against Zenda-Graustarkian backgrounds. Harland managed to convince the Anglo-Saxon plebeians that he knew intimately the lives and loves of cosmopolitan patricians. The crossroads of the two centuries were also the time of a comparative truce between Protestants and Catholics in the Anglo-Saxon countries. The French and Italian cultures were exciting Anglo-Saxon admiration and emulation more strongly than ever, and with this came a friendly curiosity towards the splendour and mysticism of the Catholic Church. *The Cardinal's Snuff-Box* was thus a most timely book. By 1902 over one hundred thousand copies had been sold, and Henry Harland's share of the profits at the time of his death was said to have been $75,000. Thanks to its success, all his earlier books were brought out in new editions. Dauphin Meunier, a friend of the author, set out to translate *The Cardinal's Snuff-Box* into French and later this version of the book had a success as a supplement to *La Mode Pratique*. Enthusiastic lady-critics compared Harland's work to Paderewski's: "The phrases which pass unnoticed from other hands fall from his fingers with a startling and almost unendurable sweetness." Magazines vied with each other for his work, and in June, 1902, the *Catholic World* wrote:—

> Innumerable are the ways by which souls have journeyed to the Catholic Church. The stories of converts, although all ending with the same sentence, tell us how differently, how unexpectedly oftentimes, the truth seized upon them. . . . Just lately we have heard that some who are now Catholics, were first led to think well of the Church by the reading of Mr. Henry Harland's *The Cardinal's Snuff-Box*.

Practical Harland sought to repeat his overwhelming success in the three books that followed: *The Lady Paramount* (1902), *My Friend Prospero* (1904), and *The Royal End* (posthumously published in 1909). But even his admirers had to admit the weakness of these efforts, with their slender plots, laboured musings, superfluous dialogue, and the same unbelievably beautiful women. A few critics hinted that now Harland was a *poseur*, that in his Jewish-life stories he had been far more sincere. But still there was enough of conventional praise from sentimental lady-readers and log-rolling critics to soothe Harland. Also, royalties continued to come abundantly from various sources—from the sophisticated publishing house of John Lane reprinting his *Yellow Book* stories as well as from the pulp-paper house of Street and Smith reprinting his Sidney Luska stories of murders on the East Side. When in 1903, after an absence of fourteen years, Harland came to New York, he was greeted by a most respectful hullabaloo in the press.

Yet, when on December 20, 1905, Harland died at San Remo, Italy, the news did not make as much impression on editors and readers as might have been expected in the case of the editor of the *Yellow Book* and the author of *The Cardinal's Snuff-Box*. Even the publication of *The Royal End* three years later did not revive the fading interest in the man and his work. For the era of muckraking had begun, the era of harsh realism and social indignation, far removed from the theoretical realism half-learned by Harland from Howells or with the social grace half-aped from Henry James.

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FOR RHADAMANTHUS, SMILING

BEING THE SECOND OF A SERIES OF FIVE OPEN LETTERS

by Branch Cabell

It was kindly of you, dear master, to send your review of my book; and all which you have to say of me therein is so affable I can entertain no least doubt that upon this special occasion you suffer from the fatal virtue of meaning well. The emotion with which I address you should in consequence be gratitude: it is a sad commentary upon human nature that to the contrary I approach you in envy.

With a most despairing envy do I regard the estate of you and of all your peers who write book reviews, disposing equably of your praise and your blame to us who write mere books as your underlings. That consciousness of one's own human fallibility which preys now and then upon lesser mortals gives you a wide berth (if one may thus far understate matters) and does not rear insidiously upon Olympus its interrogative head: no uncertainty plagues you: you do not voice opinions, but judgements, in tones which may perhaps remain jocular, or even friendly, but which know not ever any taint of self-distrust. How in the world, dear master, do you manage it? How does one raise, we will say, a proper self-respect to quite that pitch and luxuriance? I have seen you and talked with you, and I so know you to be a normally conducted person in private life; and I can but wonder what afflatus descends upon and possesses you, in common with all your fellow practitioners, when you set to work to dispose of your daily book?

Three assumptions you of your craft must perforce make: that what you have to say is of some importance, that it will be respectfully weighed by an audience of fair magnitude, and that you are superior, at least slightly superior, to the author whom you have under consideration. That last tenet, in fact, is very often true: masterpieces do not visit your desk every day; and your condescensions are then justified. The difficulty, to the one side, is that a book of such costive merits as not to outweigh your own fugitive journalism is quite obviously not worth the pains of reviewing; to the other side, there occur now and then those awkward moments when your betters come up before you for judgement.

I can still recall, for example, your review of Rudyard Kipling's last book. It was, as reviews go, an entertaining production, urbane and clement, but decisive. You attended the funeral of a once distinguished talent; you admitted civilly the Victorian achievements of Mr. Kipling, not profound work perhaps, but still quite so-so; and you deplored that his gifts, such as they once were, should all have lapsed into dotage. You were wholly convincing as to Mr. Kipling's past, present, and future, during the ten minutes it took to read your article, and I found myself in a cordial glow of agreement.

At the eleventh minute it occurred to me, as a most unfair circumstance, that Mr. Kipling's last book would be duly incorporated

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into his collected works, to survive there, if not as the main ornament of the collection, at least as a lasting addition; and that this book would continue to be reprinted and to be read, some while after both our demises, by a fair number of persons who will never even know that your article was written. It occurred to me, in brief, that your so nicely expressed, your judicious, and your really brilliant opinion of Mr. Kipling was for all practical intent valueless.

You were dealing, through no fault of your own, with your superior; you were not, and even today are not, dear master, Mr. Kipling's equal, by any imaginable standards. You were passing judgement where your jurisdiction happened not to hold, somewhat as if the National Council of Monaco were to vote an amendment to the Constitution of the United States. Meanwhile the necessity put upon you by the requirements of your trade, during these irrelevant formalities, to patronize and to correct Mr. Kipling, did for the time display you in a light so uncaptivating that I am sure we can all rejoice it was but a will-o'-the-wisp glitter, gone forever within the same moment it was apparent, when the esteemed journal to which you contribute was laid aside.

In very much the same way did you dispose of Bernard Shaw's last publication, and (for very much the same reasons) here again did you suggest that your taste and your judgement, and your commonsense even, are allowed a vacation whensoever you deal with a major figure in current letters. It is perhaps as well: for in all such instances you face an *impasse*. Just as Shakespeare is not to be deduced in his great entity from *King Lear* alone, or from *Twelfth Night* alone, or from *Titus Andronicus* alone, equally is it impossible for any writer with a career so long, so various, and so glittering as is the career of Mr. Shaw to be judged by any one of his productions; and that is the sole criterion allowed to them of your craft. Mr. Shaw, I would put it, has erected during the last forty years a secure edifice: and you attempted, you attempted perforce, to appraise its architecture by discussing one of its bricks.

You could but add to the droll falsity of your position by condescending to Mr. Shaw during the process, and this you did with a large gusto. Your comedy was of the first order. You were not, as your readers quite understood, the equal of Mr. Shaw, by any imaginable standards: but you could play, with a well practised art, that you were immeasurably his superior. So you entertained us all by dispensing patronage and grave gibes and aggrieved head-shakings where you owed deference; and by making in every other respect a delightfully solemn ass of yourself, dear master, after the very best tradition and the immemorial privilege of your trade whensoever you encounter genius.

It must be to you, I imagine, a sound and unfailing comfort that we few persons who read your articles can get through any one of them within ten minutes, once and for all: thereafter the crumpled paper you adorn goes to the waste basket, *en route* to the Salvation Army wagon, and nobody thinks any more about your morning's masterpiece. You are thus made immune to that "hobgoblin of little minds" which is called consistency. It is a position I desiderate. But my deeper envy is reserved for the frame of mind in which you labour; for some of those masterly articles which delight and edify us for ten minutes may take even longer to compose; and to imagine oneself the superior of Bernard Shaw or of Rudyard Kipling for a whole quarter of an hour should be to any hack writer a delusion exhilarating enough to brighten the entire day.

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And that, dear master, is but a beginning. There is no bound to your multitudinary and endless pleasures. From a new book by Mr. Hergesheimer or by Mr. Sinclair Lewis, or by Ellen Glasgow or Edith Wharton, or by any other writer of praiseworthy achievements, you extract the same hurtless delight in the while that you play at being more important than some one of these really important persons. You do not, I suppose, imagine in uninspired hours that your position in letters compares favourably with the position of, let us say, Ellen Glasgow. You must know, in your milder moments, that it behooves any living reviewer to approach Ellen Glasgow with obeisances. Yet, when once the afflatus of reviewing informs you, you can patronize and reprove, and put her to rights generally, without the least qualm.

It does not seem droll to you, not then, that you should instruct a genius such as you do not possess how to practise an art in which you do not pretend to competence. For I think you are quite honest about it. There appears to be something about the mere physical act of writing a review which begets a fine kindling of self-confidence and a deific state of mind such as less privileged persons induce with alcohol. There is no writer but must envy all them of your craft, who partake of this supernal pleasure at will.

For the inexperienced, the young, and the ignorant, the divine brew of reviewing is a tipple too heady. It follows that upon the nominally literary page of the local Sunday paper in many lesser cities one may find the "cub reporters", those helots of journalism, exhibited, after the old Spartan fashion, very much in their cups, as they babble there in befuddled gravity as to the month's new books. They know, these unfortunate young, they well know in their sober moments, that upon no subject beneath the sun is their opinion of any value: it is their calling instead to elicit daily the opinion of more mature persons as to this or the other topic, and to get it all quite wrong, with a touching deference: yet when once they are tipsified with the strong wine of reviewing (with which the proficient and established reporter declines to meddle), then does all decorum depart from these striplings.

They will then prophesy pot-valiantly; they will reel in reprobation and stagger in reason; they will wallow in the vomit of their turbid sentences, thence belching forth the tetchiness and the profound distinctions of the inebriated, thence patronizing their masters beerily, thence hiccuping their misprints with a large gravity: and none living knows of their meaning. Nor, for that matter, does anybody bother to inquire. Before long, though, the managing editor, that catchpenny Argus, does observe that the unreadable is not read, and he then makes an end of this unseemly exhibit. That is the history of every literary page in every small-town paper; such is the complete saga of the reviewer's craft in our provinces: and upon the whole it ends happily.

But I wander from you, dear master, who have learned to quaff of this tipple in all dignity, without any open drunkenness. I speak of young failings which are quite alien to you, in whom I can detect indeed but two failings. For, in the first place, you did, you know, well, but you did, publish that novel. An admirer must here necessarily stammer. And I pause too to wonder that so few of you Olympians can refrain from this indiscretion. It is not apposite, it is almost shocking, for your reverers to find trudging in such lowly fields the feet of Gamaliel. Yet almost every one of you does by-and-by publish a novel. And in every case it has led the reflective to note all its author's subsequent

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remarks about other persons' novels with a shaken reverence. It has led many to suspect that its author really did not know much about novel-writing: and this fact (they have whispered) no professional judge of novels can afford to establish with documentary evidence. Mr. Waldo Frank, they remark, has now for a long while laboured at criticism, but he has not yet succeeded in living down those novels of his late nonage, which set for him a task to baffle Methuselah.

Nor is this the only consideration involved. When a hitherto so well-thought-of Olympian as Miss Rebecca West or Mr. Edmund Wilson has brought forth a novel, both charity and commonsense have led us to concede that almost anybody might have written it; merely to write *The Judge* or *I Thought of Daisy* was, thus, condonable: yet to publish either book did seem to prove the incriminated person a poor critic of literary values. But I avoid speaking of such mysteries any further, lest I appear to prattle unreverently about the august. And of your novel also, dear master, I say, with a commensurably fine touch of scholarship, *De mortuis* ——

One other failing you have exhibited, and it enabled me, I admit, to enjoy talking with you. But then an author always does, to my experience, enjoy talking with his reviewers. An author likes, most naturally, when the review has been favourable, to meet a person of marked intelligence; if to the contrary the review has belittled and excoriated, then does the author enjoy meeting its writer for less noble reasons. Let us not pry into these reasons, beyond granting the sad axiom that no sort of writing can be taken quite seriously after you have once considered the writer in person.

That is the precise point, dear master: reviewers should have no epiphany: for to find the oracle but a harmless boy, or a bald and dried up, fidgeting small fellow in nose-glasses, or a serious-minded young clumsy oaf behind large tortoise-shell spectacles—or, in brief, to find the oracle merely human—does forthwith puff up an author's so readily expansive vanity. And it was this creature (he reflects, in his blasphemy, as he gazes with far more of happiness than of veneration upon the Olympian), it was this maternal error, this ort, which spoke belittlement and vitriol and all reprobation as to my genius!

Then is the soul of that author exalted to a degree unbecoming the estate of an underling: then does *hubris* possess him, so that he babbles affably, as a man discourses with his equal. He reveres no longer. He does not even quail. I myself, when I met Messrs. Corey Ford and Henry S. Canby and Seward Collins, all three together, in the clear lighting of one memorable afternoon, was not really frightened, I remember. It is therefore in the rôle of a confessed penitent that I declare such sacrilege ought to be avoided. And two remedies suggest themselves. The one is that an Olympian should go veiled among authors, the other (the more cruel perhaps, yet the more effective way) being that at such times an Olympian should wear upon his breast a sufficiently large mirror.

So far have I strayed from speaking of that triple faith which sustains you in your sublime labours. I now return to this matter. As a reviewer you must believe always, I repeat, that what you have to say is of some importance, and that it will be respectfully weighed by an audience of fair magnitude. Well, there is no human being but lives under the happy delusion that his own utterance is of importance: your task in this precinct is easy. But when it comes to the magnitude of a reviewer's audience, your faith and your imagination must, in ungracious, negligible, mere logic, be put to a strain more trying.

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One confronts here a point whereon opinions are free, and free to differ. Yet two considerations stay undeniable. It is a perhaps regrettable but certain fact that the majority of persons do not ever read the literary page in the paper they read daily: their concern is with such trivialities as the gaudier murders, the foreign outlook, or the stock market. It is another fact (amenable to much the same description) that favourable or unfavourable reviews do not remarkably alter the sales of a book; and the one thing which every publisher knows (even nowadays, when none of them any longer pretends to know everything) remains the axiom that, by and large, books "sell" in accordance with the informal criticism of word-of-mouth comment. Neither of these two considerations suggests, dear master, that millions of persons weigh your least utterance with quite that reverence which I could desire.

I deduce, instead, that the three tenets to which as a self-respecting reviewer you are committed, stay, to say the least of it, not even debatable; and here again envy awakes, flamingly, for I now covet your resemblance to the White Queen, in being able to believe three impossible things, if not always before breakfast, at any rate some time during each working day. And I debate if upon Olympus you are never visited by doubts if your labours there serve any practical ends?

I know that, in my own humble sphere, I continue to wonder what may be the *raison d'être*, as the learned say, and the precise justification of book reviewing? In a country wherein so many hundreds of thousands of book reviews are published every month, it must be that this never-idle industry supplies some national if obscure need. Yet who profits? I demand of myself, striking duly the pensive breast, and evoking thence naught save the most tiny of eructations.

From his own necessarily sordid standpoint the publisher, as I have said, perceives that the reviewers' "free copies" of every book he publishes are an unavoidable business expense rather than a promising investment. And the author is beyond help. His book has been electrotyped and distributed some weeks ago, so that, heed he never so fondly the oracle, its reproof and advice cannot aid him now; with his ship already at sea, he cannot well undertake to recarve more delicately its figurehead, or to reorder the personnel of his crew, no matter what saith the godlike voice.

As for the reading public, what are they to make of your divine craft, dear master, when so many oracles speak and all speak diversely? For the omniscient do not without any exception agree: twelve times each year, let it be noted, do those very worshipful Doctors, Van Doren and Canby, decide each for his own book club upon the mensual preeminence of our newest books, and in this way, upon precisely a dozen occasions annually, is the fact revealed that the one or the other errs. Rascoe is not always at one with Gannett; where Isabel Paterson commends, Miss Fanny Butcher may elect to live up to her surname; and one has known H. L. Mencken and Seward Collins to regard the same volume variously. When the Olympians thus disagree, they provide us with darkened counsel. So must the book-buyer lack any assured guide through a jungle of tropical blurbs, because the Olympians do disagree, invariably. And what the reading public gets out of all this exalted dissension, I am sure I do not know.

I know only that when I look over my scrapbooks I wonder if any one of my book reviews remains worth the seven-and-a-half cents it cost me? About the unpleasant ones I, being human, do not bother; nothing came

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of them: I surrender these, in enjoyably large numbers, to the oblivion which they have earned. But the columns upon columns of printed plaudits, with all those typographic huzzas, now forever pied, these trouble me. I perceive that, like Sir Andrew Aguecheek, I was adored once, and nothing seems to have come of that either. It does not seem fair that all the incense should have burned out quite as quickly as did the stink bombs.

When I published my last book, for example, did not Mr. Newton Arvin acclaim my superb humour, and Mr. Louis Kronenberger hymn my titanic genius, and Mr. Basil Davenport find in my prose style "the luxuriousness of Swinburne"? Did not Mr. Gorham B. Munson rank me, in his best scholastic manner, with "Shakespeare, Milton *et alia*"? The questions are purely rhetorical: and perhaps at this distance in time I may have quoted none of these gentlemen verbatim. Indeed, now I think of it, I believe that Mr. Davenport mistook the meaning of "luxuriousness", and Mr. Munson of *"et alia"*, in a different connection. It seems so, at least. Yet I cannot understand why, when both of them make so many delightful blunders of this sort continually, I should remember these two special felicities unless I had therein some special interest.

However, that does not matter. My point is merely that whether the aforementioned quartet of sub-Olympians said the aforementioned things, or said quite other things, or said nothing at all, it comes at the year's end to the same sum total: it comes to nothing. My point is that all reviewing, in so far as I can see, does but corrupt, and so waste eventually, not only such minor talents, but those really considerable talents which everywhere help to manure this ever-flowering but fruitless tree of all knowledge. I observe, in short, with Andrew Lang: "Reviewing there needs must be; but how unhappy were the necessities, how deplorable the vein, that compelled or seduced a man of your eminence into the dusty and stony ways of contemporary criticism".

It is with you a favourite topic, I note, to lament the publishing, year after year, of too many futile books by the hundreds; yet you do not deplore (or, at least, not publicly) the thousands upon thousands of futile book-reviews which appear every week. You do not exhort us (in any appropriate garb of sackcloth and ashes) to observe that at each year's end some few of its books survive, but that all the book reviews, for which forests have perished, have perished too.

All have perished, dear master, and your sublime labours are at one with the labours of Hercules. Along with the slain Hydra and conquered Cerberus and the cleaned stables of Augeus, oblivion has digested placidly the wit, the insouciance, the erudition; the rare benevolence, the discoverer's glow, and the lofty prophesying; the pæans, the sarcasms, and the demolitions; the putting of everybody (including poor old Jehovah) in exactly his proper place; the profound comprehension of human nature, of social conditions, of the future, and of every known art and science; and, above all, that unswerving infallibility to which no other being can pretend with a straight face. At the year's end it is as though these glories had never been. In the back files of magazines and of newspapers, there only, all these virtues lie disregarded: your splendours all are faded; and of your magnanimity survives upon earth no fruitage.

People will not even remember until the crack of doom the very handsome things which you have said about my new book, and your praise of me will hardly outlast the planet. It seems a great pity.

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SINCLAIR LEWIS

One of a portfolio of four life-portraits of authors by Georges Schreiber, each signed by the sitter

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GERHART HAUPTMANN

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ANDRÉ MAUROIS

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DISCOVERING H. G. DWIGHT

by Nermine Mouvafac

I THINK I was seventeen when I first discovered him—a long time ago, as long as seven years, or thereabouts. I wrote poetry in those days, and was much given to discovering things. And almost the most fascinating thing I knew of was to wander among books in a library, touching them with my hand, taking down a volume now and then to turn its pages—idly, or if it suddenly caught my fancy, with a catch of the breath which signified that my kinship with the world was to be revealed to me in yet another way. The library in which I did most of my wanderings happened to overlook a long sweep of blue Bosphorus—"the colour of it alone was better than breakfast", better indeed than many things—and when one looked up from the particular volume of the moment one would see a galleon with great curving sails, or a steamer laden with the goods of the twentieth century, or a flock of "lost souls" silvering the water where they flew over it, or a slim *caïque* that danced on the waves. Across on the Asiatic shore there were pine trees up on a hill, and groups of cypresses here and there, and a white house with two red eyes that I hoped to own some day, and straight up against the hillside the long white line of a minaret. And a little to the right, plainly to be seen, stood—only I didn't know it yet—the plane tree of Chengelköy.

I soon found out, though. But first I discovered, somewhere between Lord Dunsany and Maria Edgeworth, a book which in outward appearance was very like its neighbours, but whose title was *Stamboul Nights*. I would have read any book with such a title from cover to cover—because Stamboul is that kind of city—but this one turned out to be a king among books, one that led you from high adventure to high adventure along a way that you had once known dimly, but how much better now! For this man—and he was a stranger, an American—had taken the hillsides where you walked, the mosques that stood on their crest, your trees and your ships, and the crenellated towers in your daily view, had made them his, and was now returning them to you perfumed and tinged with his experience.

I read all the stories; there are no other stories quite like them. There never will be, I think. And yet almost all the charm holds not so much in the stories themselves as in the way they are told. There is magic in that telling. Of course things-in-themselves are—especially when you are seventeen—pretty thrilling. But to know how others have been thrilled by them—there is so much more surety in that. A good story always carries you away. But a good story, several good stories, told by a man who knows perfectly what delightful treasures he is bringing out of his pockets, who brings them out in such a way that you know there must be heaven knows how much more—it was too much to discover all at once.

And yet let no one accuse Mr. Dwight of taking his treasures too seriously. He

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would have you know that he hasn't even invented them. He has patched them together out of "odd bits of experience and gossip", a paragraph read in the *Matin*—which must have had the surprise of its life when it saw his story—and a paragraph read somewhere else. The fact remains, however, that out of the self-same situations and characters most people would have created only a paragraph in the *Matin*. Whereas he wrote *Stamboul Nights*.

I knew him almost at once. I don't mean I had the pleasure of a cup of tea with him, or anything of that sort, for by the time I had got around to him he was far from Stamboul—on another continent, in fact. But I knew him for the kind of person he was. Imagine a man who is thoroughly romantic—one is almost tempted to say the last of the romantics, except that every one of us is that—but who, because he comes of good old New England stock, is quite as amused by his romance as he is fascinated. It is part of the game to pretend that you are not romantic in the least. For obviously we are born too late in the day (even though the kindly stork may have flown with us to the City of Gold, just across from old Byzantium) into a world of bonds and stocks, missionaries and machine-guns, Baedekers and trolley-cars. But you can't fool a knowing young lady of seventeen. So I knew.

The next thing, obviously, was to hunt up his other books. There were three: *The Emperor of Elam*—a volume of stories which, on the whole, with the memory of *Stamboul Nights* fresh upon one, prove disappointing; *Persian Miniatures*, a delightful account of "some yeeres travels", only they weren't yeeres, if I remember right; and best and brightest, *Constantinople Old and New*, as it was called then. This was a nice fat volume after my own heart, and in it I found all manner of exciting places described. There was, for instance, the Golden Room of Köprülü Hüsein Pasha, inside certain "crazy wooden piles" on the Asiatic side. Do you want to hear about it? "On the garden side, where the door is, there are no windows, but a series of cupboards and niches of some light wood delicately inlaid with wavy stems and pointed leaves. On the water side an unbroken succession of windows, not very tall and set at the level of the divan, look north and west and south, and bring the Bosphorus like a great sparkling frieze into the pavilion. They also make the water light, by reflection, the upper part of the room. At the height of the window tops a shelf, slightly carved and gilded, runs entirely around the walls. Above that rises a frieze of painted panels in which tall sprays of lilies and other flowers stand in blue and white jars, each in a pointed arch and each framed by garlands of tiny conventionalized flowers. And above all hangs a golden ceiling, domed over the fountain, over each bay hollowed into an oblong recess, lovely with latticework and stalactites and carved bosses and Moorish traceries of interlaced stars, and strange border loops of a blue that echoes the jars below or the sea outside, and touches of a deep green, and exquisite little flowers, all shimmering in a light of restless water."

It's all true. You can still see it if you hurry, though it's likely to collapse into the Bosphorus at any moment. The last time I was there the *bekdji* offered to sell me one of the little shimmering flowers which he had chipped off the wall. They say one of those crazy Americans once tried to carry off the whole ceiling. And that another one, not so crazy—or at least he is a novelist—lived in the house two years. I sometimes go by in a *caïque* and look in. And I have a friend who claims that the whole thing is a sentimental

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hoax—that rococo in general is insufferable and this particular example too much of a good thing.

Then there was the plane tree of Chengelköy. I nearly cried when I discovered that it had been left out of the second edition. Of course there are other plane trees. In fact if I were dividing the world of plane trees into two, I would say that there were other plane trees and then there was the plane tree of Chengelköy. The village itself is almost directly opposite my romantic library. It is very quiet and very Turkish. You go past the Fountain of the Cabbage and three tipsy houses (alas, they have grown sober since) overhung with vines, and turn into a lane where you walk single file, squeezing yourself between the walls. To your left is the tiniest mosque you ever saw, with a minaret the size of your pencil. Then there is a bakery, not much more voluminous than a loaf of bread. And then, to the right, is the establishment of the village *coiffeur pour messieurs*, with a blue enamel dish, a pair of scissors and a very rusty-looking razor hanging outside the low window.

But by this time you are already in the little square and the plane tree is upon you. It stands in the middle, as big around as the little mosque, and lifts its branches over everything. Two of the branches have grown lengthwise toward the water—they are propped up at intervals. They are full of life, though, and the fishermen often hang long brown nets on them to dry. Some *cafedji* to whom the mysterious gods conferred momentary genius built a small platform around the great trunk, and on this platform there are little tables and chairs. Here you can sit for a glass of tea, or a cup of coffee, or a bit of Turkish Delight served impaled on a toothpick, and a good game of backgammon. Or if these delights smack too much of luxury you can just sit and look. There will be a fisherman mending a fragment of net, or making a lobster-pot. There will be, on the waterfront, a large *caïque* laden with charcoal or eggplant. Perhaps a customer will place his defenceless head into the not-too-eager hands of Ahmet, the Barber. From around the corner will come the smell of fresh bread, and as likely as not the *hodja* will suddenly appear at the top of his minaret and announce to the fisherman, the *cafedji*, the baker, the barber, and the barber's customer that the hour of God has come.

I cannot tell you how long these have been going on. The plane tree has stood there for heaven knows how many hundreds of years and every spring it puts out little balls of golden wool and new green leaves, soft as feathers. Still, I suppose, that is the way of plane trees. It doesn't explain why no friend is really a friend until he—or she—has sat with me under the plane tree of Chengelköy. Perhaps Mr. Dwight could explain. But, no—he is far too wise.

There was only one thing to do; I did it. I went home, I gathered up all my courage, and I wrote him a letter. I told him "everything". That I knew *Stamboul Nights*, figuratively speaking, by heart, that I had been to the Golden Room and the plane tree; that I wrote poetry. I don't quite know why I inflicted this last detail upon him, but it doesn't matter now—because he answered. It very nearly took my breath away. A letter, you understand—not one of those printed acknowledgements which I have heard say writers send to their importunate admirers. "Being a writer yourself", he said, and went on to talk of poetry and tradition and new standards and the times in which we live. Being a writer myself! It was too much.

The curtain drops down here, and rises a year or so later to reveal me across the oceans,

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freshly emerged from Ellis Island and entering a New England university. You have probably never been to Ellis Island. And now it is too late; for you should be only nineteen, and should have first lived upon the friendly shores of the Bosphorus with Judas trees and nightingales every spring, and candles flickering in baskets of grapes every fall, and Cut-Throat Castle on moonlit nights, from the towers of which you could spit—if you weren't a lady—across to Asia. I met the requirements, so it was altogether a memorable occasion. I can still bring life into a dull dinner party with a casual "This quite reminds me of the good old days in Ellis Island". But it was no laughing matter at first.

Here was I, then, alone in a New England university, somewhat predisposed to make it hard for people to be nice to me, and to remain on hostile terms with things. This state of affairs went on for about a month, during which the humiliation of Ellis Island wore gradually off and new interests offered many pitfalls to my aloofness. But something had to happen ere I could plunge with utter confidence the finger of inquiry into the pie of America, as my friend Flecker might say. It happened.

Towards the end of the month, a very beautiful, slim and elegant lady who had the prettiest grey hair I had ever seen and a voice to match called on me. She had heard about me from another lady whom I had met on the Atlantic reading *The Return of the Native* (or was it *The Trumpet-Major*?) on a deckchair beside mine—a delightful lady, who remained delightful even after I found out that her husband was a missionary in the Philippines. We had promptly struck up a friendship, as a direct result of which I was now whisked away (in a Yellow Taxi) from the institutional meal which awaited me, and suddenly dropped in the midst of a very pleasant room, with a fire in the fireplace, and a painting all brown and gold and orange above it, and a velvet couch drawn up to it, and a long low table covered with books and magazines. There were books in bookshelves, too, and many other notable features. And on the velvet couch sat a young man who looked something like a Greek god and something like Rupert Brooke, who got up smiling as we came in and said the American equivalent of "May your coming be agreeable".

It was an evening. During dinner—which consisted, so far as I remember, of ambrosia and nectar served in Ming porcelain and Venetian glassware—we talked. And after dinner, we went back to the couch by the fireplace and talked. We talked about an amazing number of things, all good to talk about. We asked each other questions like. "What about *Moby Dick*?" "What about Rodin?" "What about the South of France?" and answered them satisfactorily. We found out that we liked many of the same people, and that in the course of our very dissimilar lives we had acquired tastes that were strangely similar. To celebrate this discovery the young man read us some random Rupert Brooke—I had mentioned the physical resemblance, which, it seems, had struck other people too, including the young man himself. And then, if you please, he turned around to me and said, "But tell me, have you ever read H. G. Dwight?"

It turned out that these astonishing people actually owned *Stamboul Nights*, that they had read it, that on occasion they were not averse to re-reading it. On this occasion—after we had all, so to speak, fallen into each other's arms—they made me read *The Leopard of the Sea* to them. What shall I say about that reading? It tickled their fancy that

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I should myself have been born on a Stamboul night and that I should subsequently have slept through a number of such nights. And it tickled my fancy that I should be in a room six thousand miles away from it all, with people who did not talk about the glamour and exoticism of the East, who showed no surprise at the friendly Turkish idioms which crept into the story of *The Leopard of the Sea*, who took the background for granted and delighted in the tale itself and the way it was told. The man had made Stamboul recognizable to them, who were Americans and had never been there, and to me, who was a Turk and had lived there always.

After that America and I got along capitally, and in the summer a friend who knew it would give me much pleasure took me down to Washington to see Mr. Dwight, and we had dinner together at St. Mark's, and sat in the park, somewhere in the immediate vicinity of Andrew Jackson upon his horse, and went driving along the Speedway. I was horribly, painfully shy, and the effort I made to conceal this shyness made me feel at an utter disadvantage. I said absolutely the wrong things in the wrong sort of voice—not the soft, modulated voice with which an indulgent reporter had credited me, but an unnatural and surprising squeak. In short, I was being rather a fool; and the sublime and the ridiculous chased on each other's heels in my agitated mind. The occasion, nevertheless, was golden and with time (it is amazing how little one is capable of retaining for long a picture of oneself at a disadvantage) has become more and more so. Flustered as I was, I could not help noticing that Mr. Dwight was as delightful to listen to as he was to read, albeit the details of that conversation have gone down the narrow end of the sand-glass. He was about fifty-three when I saw him, with nothing in his trim presence which would have been remarkable in a gentleman who worked in the Department of State, except perhaps the humorous liveness of his eyes, the colour of which, as indeed of anything else about him, I would be at a loss to describe. He had a way of saying things, in a voice that was dry and deep, as though he were really talking about the weather—which is one way of telling your New England romantic. But if I go on I am afraid I will embroider on my memories of that evening in Washington, which is, after all, too closely associated with *Stamboul Nights* and *Constantinople* and *The Emperor of Elam* and other things less easy to put down in black and white.

Of course, there are cold hard facts about him. *Who's Who* gives you a whole list: "B. Aug. 6, 1875, s. Henry Otis and Adele M. Griswold, A. B. Amherst 1898, U. S. Consulate Venice and corr. Chicago Record-Herald 1898-1902, Curator Authors Club 1903-6, mag. work in Eur. and N. E. 1906-14, with Supreme War Council, Versailles, 1918-19, sp. ass. Dept. of St. 1920-5". And so on. Henry Otis was a missionary in Turkey, as his father had been before him, as one of his daughters still is. His second wife was the mother of H. G. (which by the way means Harrison Griswold and not Herbert George). There were several brothers and sisters, and later a third wife; and still later, a fourth. H. G. was born in Scutari, alias the City of Gold—"the straggling settlement of wooden houses set off by a few minarets, and shut in by a great black curtain of cypresses, that comes down to the Asiatic shore opposite the mouth of the Golden Horn". Of his childhood he says that "there must have been less difference between a Minor Asiatic infancy and a New English one than might be imagined. It was conducted, for the most part,

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in the same tongue. It was enlivened by the same games and playthings. It was embittered by the same books and pianos. Its society was much more limited, however, and it was passed, for the most part, behind high garden walls, to adventure beyond which, without governess or guardian of some sort, was anathema".

As a young boy he lived in Bebek, on the other side of the Bosphorus, in the home of Alexander Thomson, head of the British and Foreign Bible Society. There is mention in my notes of "porridge without sugar and milk" the thought of which brings up a not-too-happy picture of life. Certainly there was something about the milieu in which the young Dwight moved which made him bitter for long years to come against missionaries. But there was also something about him, fortunately, which enabled him to escape heredity and environment successfully, and should the keys of heaven be withheld from him someday it will not be because he is guilty of having saved souls.

The years in Venice were perhaps the most colourful period of his life. And when at their close, he returned to New York (he was then twenty-six), he decided that life was finished. As a matter of fact life continued, and at no less colourful a place than Stamboul, where he found himself in the summer of 1913 putting together *Constantinople Old and New*. (The title, by the way, is one he didn't like and has altered in the second edition.) This was going to be "something between Loti's *Vers Ispahan* and Howells's *Venetian Life*". He lived in a house called The Cedars, up in Hissar. He worked all day at his book and took no responsibility socially or otherwise. Once a day he appeared in the living-room where he would walk up and down, fingering his beads like a good Turk, and talking. Then back to his typewriter. He took immense pains. Nothing is stated in his book that is not verified, and a good deal is rewritten. There are very few inches of Stamboul which the writer has left unphotographed, either with his camera or with his pen. It so happened that he could also throw in for good measure two or three wars, one revolution, one counter-revolution, and the fall of an empire. Others have written of these things, dwelling more amply on treaties and capitulations, Bagdad railways and grand vizirs. He has concerned himself rather with the doings and thinkings of the man in the street, so that the final chapters of his book give a far better picture of life in those troubled and vivid years than I, for one, have ever read in anything else.

Persian Miniatures is, as he says in the preface, "no treatise on those little pictures, sometimes gayly coloured, sometimes faintly sketched, of turbaned princes and flowering trees and dancing gazelles which it has become so much the fashion to collect—and to forget". It is a book of sketches—"very 'unsewn', illustrating in their random way but one small corner of Persia, and designed not at all to catch the eye of the serious-minded". As to how it came to be written: "I had friends; the destiny of my friends led them to Hamadan; they were good enough to invite me to follow them; I did so a little more promptly, I fear, than they expected. The rest was pure *cacoëthes scribendi*—aggravated by the fact that I happened to be in that remote theatre of the Push to the East when the German war broke out". It is a charming book for a lazy day, intended especially for those who like travel books and do not like Mr. Halliburton.

During the war—when he was in France—Mr. Dwight developed a nostalgia for America. He returned there in 1920, and has lived there ever since—mostly in Washing-

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ton where he is at present and about which he has written a book. Occasionally he reviews books on the East for magazines. But he will probably never return to it. Stamboul in particular—if it can be called "the East"—he does not wish to see again. Too many things have happened there, and though the Judas trees still flower in the spring-time and the nightingales still sing, there hath passed away a glory from the city of cities. And yet was it not he who said that eras do not end like plays with the climactic drop of a curtain, and that though new leaves should come out on the plane tree they will still be plane leaves, not elm or maple leaves?

As for me, I now live on a balcony within easy access of Cut-Throat Castle, otherwise known as Rumeli Hissar. (There is a house, too, somewhere.) Half an hour or so of brisk walking would take one to the Place of Martyrs. But there is no place that half an hour's brisk walking would not take one to. From the balcony one sees much history and much geography, all the ships of the world and not a little of its poetry. At one end is the little rococo palace of Gök Su and at the other Beylerbey Palace where Empress Eugénie stayed during her visit to Abdul Medjit. There are also two palaces on my side of the water, one of which belonged to that picturesque old lady, the Khedive's mother, who was one of the last great figures of the Bosphorus. The other is now a co-educational lycée. The way to the Golden Room, just around the corner, lies through the silver cypress which the moon does not cast at Saadabad alone. And the plane tree is there too, across the way. But there is one thing I do not know. Where is the Pasha's garden? "Two big horse-chestnut trees, their candles just starting alight in the April air, stood there at the foot of a terrace, guarding a fountain that dripped in the ivied wall. A thread of water started mysteriously out at the top of a tall marble niche into a little marble basin, from which it overflowed by two flat bronze spouts into two smaller basins below. From them the water dripped back into a single basin still lower down, and so tinkled its broken way past graceful arabesques and reliefs of fruits and flowers, into a crescent-shaped pool at the foot of the niche." I shall never know, of course, what there was in the handsome old chest which the Pasha and Shaban dropped into a hole under a cypress, on that mad April night. But I like to think, when I stand on my balcony, that the two horse-chestnuts are there too, guarding their fountain which still drips in the friendly silence, though the Pasha and his foreign wife have long since crossed that thread-like bridge which breaks under the feet of the wicked, but allows the virtuous to reach the other shore in safety.

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PROUST AND THE MODERN DILEMMA

by Herbert Agar

THE publication of the final volume of the English translation of *A la Recherche du temps perdu* comes at a time when Proust is already becoming unfashionable, and all the wrong people have stopped praising him for all the wrong reasons. There could be no better time to consider him for what he was, for one of the most successful of the artists and thinkers who have tried to find significance in modern life. This aspect of Proust has been ignored by the people who wish to believe, in spite of appearances, that the modern world is creating a new and healthy civilization, and who have been comforting themselves with the thought that the philosophy or religion which will incorporate the blessings of modernity is not yet born. It is soothing to expect that at any moment a "new synthesis" will be created which will solve all the problems of our day; it is less soothing to study the attempts that have already been made to create this synthesis, and to recognize what they appear to prove, namely, that although the modern temper can produce great spirits there is no reason to believe it can produce, or even preserve, a great civilization.

The ideas that underlie Proust's attempt to find a meaning for life have been elaborated, in pure philosophy, by such thinkers as Signor Croce in Italy and Mr. Warner Fite in the United States; but the most fruitful place to study these ideas is in the work of Proust. *A la Recherche du temps perdu* is a complete modern æsthetic and moral philosophy, including both theory and illustration. The background for this philosophy, the problem that it attempts to solve, can be roughly indicated as follows. In the past, man has known three ways of apprehending life: art, science, and theology (or metaphysics); and he has vaguely recognized that there was a form of truth appropriate to each of these forms of consciousness. The artistic approach to life may be described as intuitional. Intuition is life known as inner experience, life as the immediate awareness of such experience. The expression of an intuition may be called "true" if it satisfies the imagination, if it is a successful rendering of experience as subjective fact. There is no standard of comparison, and no utilitarian test, that can be applied to intuition; it stands or falls by virtue of its own intensity and inner conviction. When Shelley wrote:

> And multitudes of dense white fleecy clouds
> Were wandering in thick flocks along the mountains
> Shepherded by the slow unwilling wind,

he scarcely used a phrase that is not demonstrably "untrue" from the scientific standpoint. And yet the lines are a convincing picture of the event as it was experienced by Shelley. However, if the same event were described by a meteorologist, the result would illustrate the second form of consciousness, the scientific or conceptual form. Conceptual thought presents life no longer as inner experience, but as something observed impersonally, as something classified and described

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for utilitarian ends. The standard of "truth", in this case, is utility. Conceptual or scientific thought is said to be "true" when it produces desirable results, such as increased control over natural forces in the present, or increased power to predict their workings in the future.

The third form of consciousness, the third way of apprehending life, admits none of the limitations of the first two ways. Whereas the standard of intuitional truth is subjective, and the standard of conceptual truth is utilitarian, the standard of theological or metaphysical truth is absolute. Man, in the past, has always believed that either by divine aid or else by his own higher reason (which may be described as a co-operation of the faculties that I have arbitrarily separated in order to suggest the contrast between art and science) he had the power of attaining to at least a partial knowledge of the absolute, to a true although limited awareness of the nature and purposes of God and the universe. Believing this, he naturally believed that even the earth-bound truths of art and science contained suggestions of the absolute truth which they could not directly reveal. Therefore, faith in the reality of theological or metaphysical truth gave dignity and importance to every product of man's consciousness. The modern temper, however, denies the possibility of knowledge of the absolute. This denial not only eliminates metaphysics and theology from the realm of serious pursuits, but it leaves the two other forms of consciousness (art and science) stranded in pure subjectivity, unable even to give suggestions of objective, absolute truth.

In the late nineteenth century, when the modern temper first began to make itself felt, its full implications were seldom realized. The pre-moderns of those days, as they abandoned faith in the absolute of theology and metaphysics, substituted faith in an absolute which they thought to attain by means of science. It is only quite recently that it has been generally admitted that science, being an empirical form of thought, can produce nothing that will lend meaning or significance to life. Modern thought, therefore, is turning from the scientific philosophies that were recently its characteristic product. But if theology is abandoned, and if science's pretensions to take the place of theology are discredited, what is left? Only the attempt to construct a universe and a moral philosophy out of simple introspection. The spirit has nothing but its own self-consciousness with which to build whatever frail shield it holds between itself and nihilism. Where else, save in his own thoughts, may man seek for strength or for enlightenment, when he lives in a world bereft of God and of the absolute and of all objective sources of value?

Mr. Warner Fite writes: "*Morality is the self-conscious living of life.* . . . To be moral is to be thoughtful; to be conscious; which to me means to be self-conscious; to live one's life, if possible, in the clear consciousness of living." And again: "All moral distinctions are distinctions in the degree of self-consciousness. In like fashion is the distinction of truth and error a distinction of self-consciousness. And just as there is no standard of morality, so is there no standard of truth. The final question about a want is: Do I still want it after knowing what it is I want? And the final question about a meaning is: Do I still mean it after knowing what I mean?"

Stated thus boldly, such conclusions are startling, and yet they are proper conclusions from the premises on which most people now base their lives. Proust was the first artist to fully explore the implications of this modern creed, and by combining it with his

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Ruskinian faith that art and morals are inseparable he arrived at the system of thought which his huge novel expresses. *A la Recherche du temps perdu* is the record of Proust's attempt to create meaning in the face of modern nihilism, to rebuild his own heaven and refurbish his own values while admitting all the time that his construction might bear no relation to anything outside his mind. This is the lonely task of every active spirit that has been captured by the modern temper and that has outgrown the naïve faith in science.

If truth and morality (and hence, for Proust, beauty) are determined by the degree of self-consciousness with which life is lived, then the task is to enrich each present moment by experiencing it with the maximum of associations, of meaning and emotion, derivable from the past. As soon as all supernatural values are eliminated, the importance of the *temps perdu* becomes clear. For the chief remaining distinction between the life of an animal and that of a great artist is in the range and intensity of consciousness; and consciousness can be deepened only by drawing upon the storehouse of memory. The moment's consciousness is a mere focal point, intense or dull, depending on how much is focussed upon it. A life consisting of successive present moments, each experienced in isolation, is life as it may present itself to an animal. But life as apprehended by an active spirit contains far more of the past than of the physical present. To whatever extent the present, as it appears and vanishes, is enriched by association with all that can be brought to bear upon it from the past, to that same extent life gains depth and significance. Proust wrote: "At whatever moment we consider it, our spirit has only an almost fictitious value, in spite of the many entries on the balance sheet of its riches, for either one group of these or another is always unnegotiable." And the implications of all his thought are suggested by the following sentence: "Flowers that are shown me today for the first time do not seem to me to be real flowers." In other words, there is no reality—no richness and no imaginative truth—to an experience that does not evoke associations from the past. Life is thin and meaningless except in so far as it is a successful *recherche du temps perdu*.

For Proust, therefore, the moral problem is this: how much of the almost fictitious value of our spirits shall we be able to make real? Shall we be content to leave our memory unexplored, our past a *temps perdu*, a storehouse wherein our riches lie neglected? Or shall we attempt to realize our full stature in time, and so live to the limit of our power? The recovery of the *temps perdu* is thus really the discovery of the present with its full personal significance. In other words, if the past is a *temps retrouvé*, then the present is truly alive. This is what Proust meant when he said that the *temps retrouvé* is reality, inner reality, the reality of art. And so, if this search for inner reality is the moral problem, it is clearly the æsthetic problem as well. For along his highly individual path, and quite uninfluenced by Signor Croce, Proust evolved the Crocean theory of æsthetic. Beauty, according to Proust, accompanies the clear realization of this subjective reality, of life as inner experience in contrast to life as external observation. Beauty accompanies the successful effort to experience each moment with richness derived from expanded consciousness and intensity derived in part at least from emotions evoked out of the unconscious. The sentence about "flowers that are shown me today for the first time", means quite simply that "reality" is a function of this expanded consciousness. "The

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universe", writes Proust, "is true for all of us, and different for each one of us. . . . It is not one universe that awakens every morning, but millions of universes—almost as many as there are eyes and human brains." And one of his favourite remarks is that the world was not created once only, but as many times as an original mind has been born. All this, of course, is pure Crocean æsthetics—only for Proust æsthetics and moral philosophy (and hence the problem of reality) are indistinguishable.

Such is Proust's theory, and unlike most philosophers he gives a picture of his theory in practice. His novel is the story of a man who is trying to write a novel and who cannot begin until his past has becomes a *temps retrouvé*, until he has grasped this inner reality, this source of all significance. In the course of his *recherche*, he finds that it is only involuntary memories that are of real assistance. "My work", Proust said, "is dominated by the distinction between involuntary and voluntary memory. In my opinion, voluntary memory (which is above all a memory of the mind and of the eyes) gives us nothing but the unreal external appearance of the past." In other words, the moment's consciousness cannot be enhanced by a cold deliberate recollection of the past, but only by those involuntary associations, stirred by what appears to be a happy accident, which recall past experiences with their old emotional significance. When such an association occurs, it must be seized and followed out at whatever cost in pain and effort, for only so can the spirit live in the present and the past contemporaneously, thus occupying its full position in time.

It is interesting to contrast the modern with the Victorian temper by noticing how the wheel has come full circle since the days of Proust's much-admired Ruskin. When Ruskin said that art and morals were one, he meant that the subject-matter was of primary importance in art, and that a supreme work of art would exhibit the moral virtues both directly and indirectly. And as for the nature of the moral virtues—for Ruskin that was a matter of fact, of transcendental and unshakable knowledge. But to the modern temper the words transcendental and unshakable sound a little funny, and when Proust asserts that art and morals are inseparable he is not applying moral standards to the field of art, but artistic standards to the field of morals. Beauty, says Signor Croce, is the successful expression of the intuition, quite irrespective of what the intuition is about. To be moral, says Mr. Warner Fite, is to be self-conscious, quite irrespective of what you may self-consciously choose to do. And Proust, who had never read either of these philosophers, agreed with them completely, because he, too, had discovered that for the modern spirit there is no salvation except introspection, reflection, and self-awareness.

This discovery came to Proust like a religious conversion, and from being a clever, worldly amateur of letters he became almost a hermit, devoting the remainder of his life to the impassioned *recherche du temps perdu*. His book is the record of that search, a monument to the spirit's effort to find a way of breaking clear from the intolerable bondage of mechanical pseudo-scientific materialism. Having abandoned all forms of transcendentalism, and exposed the insufficiency of science, there was only one road left for the modern spirit. Proust was the first great artist to follow that road to the end, and although he found his own salvation he found nothing that could save society. There is no gospel for the world at large in this life-long effort to obtain the maximum of introspective consciousness. It offers no sup-

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port in weakness, and no clear guide in perplexity; and it exacts a concentration of energy and purpose that most people can make only in the name of some great objective truth. For there can be few harder struggles than this Socratic effort to lead an examined life, especially for the modern disillusioned mind which knows that the significance it is winning so painfully is self-created, and that therefore it may bear no relation to the true meaning of the universe.

Proust, à quels raouts allez-vous donc le soir,
Pour en revenir avec des yeux si las et si lucides?

This tired clarity that M. Paul Morand found in Proust's eyes characterizes the modern spirit at its finest. Lucidity will come with true self-knowledge; but there can be no rest for those who have lost faith in every explanation of life but who refuse to lose faith in life itself, who insist on seeking at each moment for the significance and beauty that they believe to be implicit in all experience, and whose unhappy philosophy leaves them no place to seek save in their own hearts. "All that we can say", wrote Proust in one of his few passages of conventional moralizing, "is that everything happens in this life as if we entered it with a burden of obligations contracted in a previous existence". It is the "as if" that marks these sentences for a product of the modern temper. The "as if" protects the sentences from becoming a statement of faith, and turns them into mere musings on the strange irrational impulses that are found in the human consciousness. Such musings may be the basis of a good life for a man with broad culture and a creative mind, but nothing could be built on them that could benefit the world at large. It is this we should learn from Proust: that the life of introspection appears to offer no solution for the moral problem facing our society. Since losing faith in supernatural values we have sought a meaning for life both in natural science and in a subtle refinement of the Greek doctrine, Know Thyself. Both searches have failed. Our present task is to find some objective basis for values; otherwise our civilization will die.

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THE TABLE OF TRUTH

by Hugh Kingsmill

MUCH though I had enjoyed my talk with Oscar Wilde by the upper reaches of the River Styx, various circumstances prevented me from visiting the underworld again until I arrived there in the ordinary course of things.

On my second morning, the hall-porter in the hotel where I was staying gave me a telephone message from Mr. Desmond MacCarthy, saying that he would call for me at noon. I thought this very friendly of Mr. MacCarthy, very friendly indeed. We had met only two or three times on earth. It was most flattering.

I was in the lounge at five minutes to twelve. At ten to one Mr. MacCarthy hurried in through the swing-door, exclaimed "We are very late", and hurried out, with me in pursuit. He scrambled into a waiting car, I scrambled in after him. "Mr. Wilde" he gasped to the chauffeur, and we drove off.

"We're late . . . lunch," he said, fumbling in his breast-pocket.

"It's really most . . ." I murmured.

"Please don't misunderstand," he was looking hurriedly through some papers he had taken from his pocket. "Of course,"—he smiled a little painfully—"I should always be charmed to be your host, but, actually, I am merely conveying you to Mr. Wilde's; and it's not, strictly speaking, a social function. Ah! here we are!" He held up an invitation card. "Oh, *half*-past one! Splendid! I thought it was *one*. That gives us plenty of time." He handed me the card, which I reproduce.

> Tables of Truth.
>
> Mr. Hugh Kingsmill.
>
> [Section Seventy-six. (Literature)
> Table No. 850,012, 764.]
>
> At Mr. Oscar Wilde's—May 12th.
> 1-30 for 1-45 p.m.
>
> *First Attendance;*
> Mr. Noel Coward, Mr. T. S. Eliot, Mr. William Gerhardi, Mr. Hugh Kingsmill, Mr. Beverley Nichols, Mr. Evelyn Waugh.

"We shall be more than punctual," Desmond MacCarthy murmured half-aloud. "Actually *more* than punctual." For some minutes we drove on in silence. "There's a certain amount of moral training, I suppose one must call it, down here," he suddenly remarked.

"Really!"

"It's what we're here for, isn't it?" he said curtly.

"Of course, of course!"

"And they certainly let us down quite lightly."

"They?"

"The authorities."

"Oh, the authorities."

Another silence was broken by "Don't you hate imparting information? I do".

"Especially", I suggested "when the other person is anxious for it."

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"Oh, of course, *that* makes it quite unbearable."

A stoutish man, a little ahead of us on the road, paused on hearing our car and turned towards us.

"Oh, dear!" Desmond MacCarthy exclaimed, "that dreadful bore! . . . He knows my car . . . He's signalling . . . I suppose we must pick him up. James, we must pick him up." The car slowed down.

"It's that wretch Theodore Dreiser," Desmond MacCarthy murmured. "Oscar calls him 'The American Tragedy'."

"Thanks for the information."

"It slipped out."

"Thanks, all the same."

"I appreciate this very keenly, Mr. MacCarthy," Theodore Dreiser panted, as he struggled into the car. "Was that your foot, sir?"

"It *was*," I sighed.

"Oh, Mr. Dreiser," said Desmond MacCarthy, "I do wish you'd tell Mr. Kingsmill all about this lunch. I'm such a bad hand at explaining anything. Will you?"

"Why, most certainly I will," said Dreiser; but as the drive lasted only another twenty-five minutes, he could not do more than clear the ground for his explanation.

On reaching Oscar Wilde's house, we were shown through to a beautiful lawn, at the far end of which, in the shade of elm and beech trees, a number of persons were talking in small groups. Two isolated figures, an old man in a shapeless wideawake and long cloak, and a small boy, stood at some distance both from each other and the nearest group. In the center of the lawn a round table was being laid for lunch. Near-by, a smaller table, also round, had already been laid for four.

"I mustn't bore you two any longer," Desmond MacCarthy said to Dreiser and me, and flitted away towards a group which was rather noticeably composed of Mr. Winston Churchill and Lord Birkenhead. I was alone with Dreiser.

"The point which I was trying to make, Mr. Kingsmill, immediately prior to our dismounting from Mr. MacCarthy's automobile, was just this . . ." Dreiser broke off as a concealed loud speaker suddenly crooned in a golden voice, "Pray silence for Mr. Oscar Wilde!"

Gracefully disengaging himself from a group which included Sir James Barrie, Mr. Evelyn Waugh, and Mr. Beverley Nichols, Wilde stepped forward. Dreiser and I hastened across the lawn, and as we joined the others Wilde, who had been waiting for his audience to complete itself, began to speak.

"I wish my first word could have been 'Gentlemen'," he said. "It is such a charming word, isn't it? But if I am to pass scatheless through the dreadful ordeal that waits for me at yonder table, I must preserve, unflawed by any impulse of courtesy or caprice of paradox, the mood of veracity which I have brought with me today as a man bears in his hands a bitter herb for his salvation. To create that mood has been a very painful task. I do not ask for your sympathy—you will, I know, give it to me without the asking, when you hear that for the last seven days, as time is measured by the calendar, I have not allowed myself a single deviation from the strictest accuracy of statement. Nor is that all. It is not even the worst. I have gone still further. I have forced myself to practise a gratuitous veracity: I have sought occasions to utter deliberate truths. As if it were but yesterday I remember"—he paused for a moment—"but it *was* yesterday!—how I insisted on supplying a very tedious person with absolutely correct information about the time when his train started. At least I be-

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lieved it to be correct when I supplied it, and in these moral matters it is the intention alone which counts, as I explained to the person afterwards.

"If, then, I may not address you as 'Gentlemen'—and in parenthesis may I tell you how delighted I am to realize", his gaze travelled over us as he spoke, "that there is not amongst you who has interpreted my difficulty in this respect as a reflection on himself—if, I say, I may not address you as 'Gentlemen', still less, if that be possible, may I address you as *'Confrères'*. Literature is to me a very sacred thing. It is also a very rare thing. Vowed as at the moment I so unfortunately am to a relentless veracity, I cannot, I really cannot, venture to acknowledge any more specialized connection between myself and you who are now listening to me than our common humanity.

"Fellow-creatures, I have done. I have said little, but if what I have said shall have helped you to the assurance that I am not unprepared for the ordeal before me, I am content."

The silence that followed was broken by a shrill cry of distress. It was Beverley Nichols turning on Desmond MacCarthy. "You told me he would explain *everything*, and he has explained *nothing*!"

I saw a look of surprise on Wilde's face, which deepened as T. S. Eliot, taking two paces forward, said in a clear resolved voice, "Mr. Wilde . . ."

"Pray silence!" crooned the loud speaker.

For a few moments we were privileged to witness the impressive spectacle of an authoritarian grappling with an anti-authoritarian impulse. Victory was not long delayed. Bowing his head, T. S. Eliot stepped back two paces.

"Pray silence!" crooned the loud speaker again. "When the host, Mr. Oscar Wilde, has taken his seat, guests will seat themselves in the following order, beginning on Mr. Oscar Wilde's right hand: Mr. T. S. Eliot, Sir James Barrie, Master Peter Robin, Mr. A. A. Milne, Lord Birkenhead, Mr. William Gerhardi, Mr. Hilaire Belloc, Mr. Theodore Dreiser, Mr. Winston Churchill, Mr. Desmond MacCarthy, Mr. Hugh Kingsmill, and Mr. Max Beerbohm.

"The small table is reserved for Mr. Thomas Carlyle, Mr. Noel Coward, Mr. Beverley Nichols, and Mr. Evelyn Waugh.

"Mr. Oscar Wilde will now take his seat."

Falling in behind Wilde we walked across the lawn. I found myself next to William Gerhardi. "My God, what are those robots?" he exclaimed. "They were not there before." Following his gaze, I saw a number of iron or steel figures ranged around the two tables, one behind each chair. Shaped like human beings, they were far above life-size; and the huge hollow sockets of their eyes and the sharp geometrical pattern of their frames and limbs filled me with uneasiness. "Why did not Desmond MacCarthy explain?" Gerhardi cried. "He told me he would explain everything to Noel Coward, and that Noel Coward would tell me as we drove here."

"And, I suppose . . ."

"He did not come round to Noel Coward this morning, as he had promised. He rung up at twelve-thirty instead, to say that there was some bore he had an appointment with, and he had only just remembered the appointment."

"Too bad."

"He should either remember appointments in time, or not remember them at all. Those robots—why are they there? Will they strike us?"

"Oh, I shouldn't think so. Most of the people here have been through this business

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before, I think, and they've obviously not been mangled."

"*They* have not been mangled, but that is no proof that *others* have not been mangled. Perhaps these are the only survivors."

"I hadn't thought of that."

"You look frightened. Are you frightened?"

"No, not frightened."

"What are you then?"

"Alarmed."

The figures lost none of their menace as we drew nearer; and it was with an almost servile bow to the monster behind my particular chair that I shuffled past him and took my seat.

The plan of the two tables given below will make things clearer to the reader.

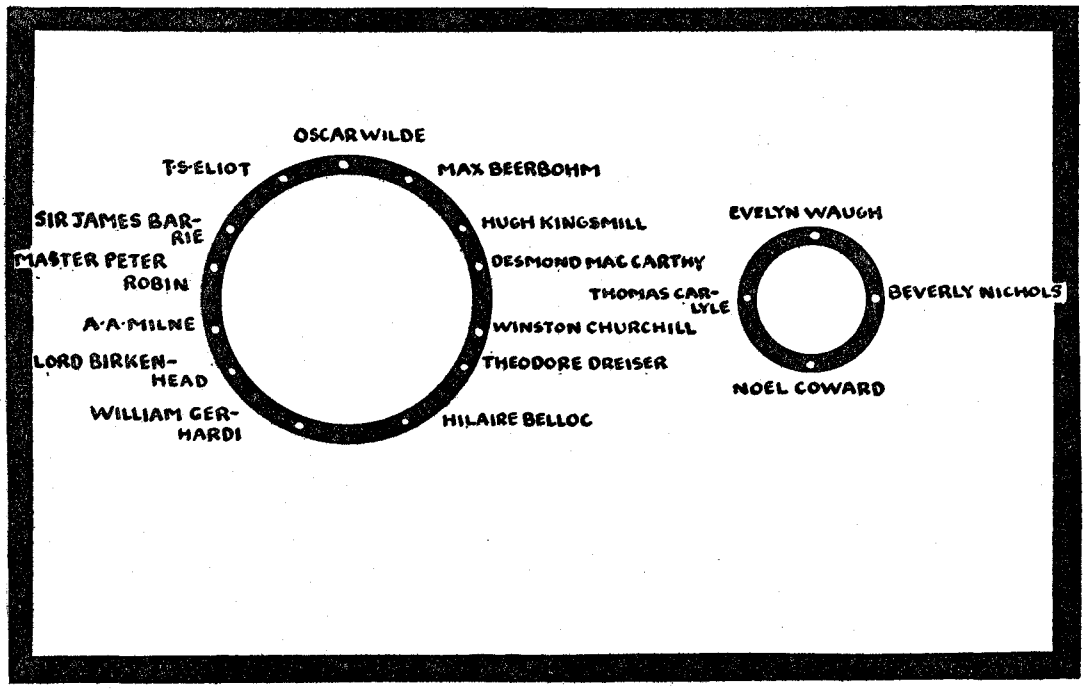
When we had taken our places, Oscar Wilde, who was looking pale, said, in a brusque hard tone: "The only drink served at this lunch is a light cider. It's in those jugs. You may help yourselves. No *hors d'œuvres*, waiter. Clear soup, please."

The meal began in a silence which was broken by Thomas Carlyle alone, who, it was plain, had preferred thick soup to clear. I had a good view of him from where I sat: he had removed neither his wideawake nor his cloak, and his expression was savage in the extreme. Having finished his soup, he wiped his mouth with the back of his hand. He was wearing brown woollen mittens, and I could see that Noel Coward's face was working strangely.

"*Dear* Mr. Carlyle!" Noel Coward cried suddenly, "how quite *too* . . ."

There was a frightful clang. Noel Coward's head sank forward, his mouth fell open, and his eyes stared with idiot vacancy into space, while from the jaws of the monster behind him a metallic bray roared forth:

"DEAR MR. CARLYLE HOW QUITE TOO DIVINE THOSE MITTENS ARE WON'T YOU PLEASE TELL ME WHO YOUR GLOVER IS BUT I SUPPOSE HE'S TERRIBLY PROUD AND WOULDN'T DREAM OF WORKING A PAIR OF THOSE ADORABLE MITTENS FOR ME."



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Another clang, as the jaws of the monster snapped to. The light of reason returned to Noel Coward's eyes, his mouth closed, his head went back. Drawing a silk handkerchief from his sleeve, he dabbed his face feebly, half sobbing "Oh dear! Oh dear! Oh dear!"

"Oh, that is a relief!" Oscar Wilde cried. "It's the waiting for the *first* one which is so loathsomely trying. I wonder if any of you can realize how *much* more comfortable I feel now. But how very rash of that young man after all my warnings!"

"What warnings?" William Gerhardi exclaimed. "There have not been any warnings, Mr. Wilde. No one has warned us."

"I knew there was something I had forgotten!" Wilde murmured. "How dreadfully careless of me!" He seemed about to continue, but a cautious look came into his eyes, and he remained silent.

"Perhaps you will now make good your omission," T. S. Eliot said firmly.

"But surely . . ." Wilde waved his hand towards the monsters which encircled us. "You have heard, you have seen for yourself . . ."

"I must press for an adequate explanation," Eliot insisted. The hunted look in Wilde's eyes touched me. "I think it's all perfectly clear," I said, addressing Eliot. "If we start saying anything that we know to be untrue, or even insincere, it's taken up by these . . . our attendants take it up, and complete what we were going to say, and we have to sit by looking idiotic till they've finished. It's a discipline in veracity and sincerity."

"Most lucid," Wilde murmured.

Pleased by Wilde's commendation, I leant forward, lowering my voice a little. "Mr. Carlyle's mittens for instance . . . Noel Coward was obviously not giving his real opinion of them. Of course I . . ."

Clang! My mouth fell open, my chin dropped, and my eyes were, I felt, glazed in imbecility. But no welcome stupor clouded my mind, and I shivered as the monster roared:

"OF COURSE I DON'T SUGGEST THAT HOWEVER INAPPROPRIATE MR. CARLYLE'S MITTENS MIGHT BE IF WORN BY NOEL COWARD THEY ARE OPEN TO CRITICISM AS WORN BY MR. CARLYLE OR EVEN LACKING IN A CERTAIN DISTINCTION."

Clang! The hideous bray ceased. I put out a shaking hand and poured myself a glass of cider, which I drank with lowered eyes, for I felt that the repulsive exhibition I had made of myself must have created a strongly unfavourable impression among the other guests.

"Excellent sole, this, Winston," I heard Lord Birkenhead say.

"Excellent, F. E."

"A very successful sauce, too."

"Very successful."

My self-consciousness was eased by this interchange, and I reflected on the strong practical sagacity with which these two statesmen limited themselves to a topic on which sincerity was easily attained. But why were they here, I wondered. My left-hand neighbour was Desmond MacCarthy, my right-hand Max Beerbohm. Turning to Max Beerbohm, I murmured "Why are Churchill and Birkenhead here?"

"They have written books," he answered without turning his head.

"Of course! So they have."

Clang! I jumped. My nerves were on edge. But it was only Gerhardi's monster, braying a tribute to Lord Birkenhead as an artist in prose.

Ten more minutes passed in complete silence, except for Winston Churchill's "A capital roast, this, F. E.", and Lord Birkenhead's rich assured response "Capital, Win-

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ston". I was feeling increasingly curious about the small boy who sat between Sir James Barrie and Mr. A. A. Milne, but saw no way to satisfy my curiosity. His cowed dejected look was not, I thought, natural to him. In more normal circumstances he would, I imagined, be a frank, fearless little fellow, with open gaze and a clear ringing laugh. "Uncle Jim," he suddenly piped, "may I have some more beef?" Sir James Barrie, who had been sitting with his back half turned to the boy, said nothing, but his face twitched nervously. The boy turned to Mr. Milne. "Uncle Artie," he piped, on a higher note, "may I have some more beef?" Mr. Milne, who had been sitting with his back half turned to the boy, said nothing, but his face twitched nervously. The boy's eyes filled with tears. Turning towards Wilde, he gasped, half sobbing, "Uncle Oscar, *may* I have some more *beef*?"

"Certainly. Waiter, another helping of beef for Master Peter Robin."

"Why wouldn't they answer him?" I asked Max Beerbohm in a whisper.

"Nerves." Max Beerbohm looked rigidly ahead as he spoke.

"But why? Who is he?"

"A synthesis of Peter Pan and Christopher Robin. Supplied by the authorities."

"Oh, I see."

Silence again. It began to get on my nerves, and I turned a question over in my mind several times, examining each word with the utmost care. "Excuse me, Mr. Wilde," I ventured at last; "but would you explain to me how this lunch can be a training in sincerity and truthfulness when everyone's afraid to make a remark?"

"Ah, but think of the remarks which are *not* made!" Wilde answered. "That's where the training lies! Why, fifty years ago, at my first lunch," he lowered his voice, "Carlyle referred to the Eternal Verities no less than seventeen times. I do so hope he won't forget himself today. He's been quite wonderful, so far. But he's dreadfully obstinate, dreadfully obstinate." Wilde shook his head mournfully.

"Hasn't he ever got through a lunch without a single lapse?"

"Never! I don't know who those young men at his table may be, but of course Carlyle will have been told all about them, and unless they're quite impossibly unlike what they seem to be, I'm very much afraid Carlyle will mention the Eternal Verities again. Of course, he may be frightfully rude and sincere instead. I *do* hope he will be frightfully rude and sincere instead."

"Will it be his last lunch, if he avoids the Eternal Verities?"

"Oh, I'm sure it will be. It must be. All the other great Victorians have been passed. Even Thackeray."

"What was Thackeray's special difficulty?"

"The goodness of good women. Such an absurd thing to talk about!"

"I hope you won't think me impertinent, Mr. Wilde, but it's really very delightful of you to be so sympathetic about Carlyle."

Wilde looked at me in astonishment. I realized that I had misinterpreted his anxiety about Carlyle, and was about to excuse myself for my obtuseness, when a sudden roar made us all jump.

"Ye puir meeserable creatures! Lap-dog Jeremiahs I call ye, daintily biting the hand that feeds ye, and verra careful not to bite too shar-r-ply!"

"Oh, I do hope he'll be wise!" Oscar murmured. Carlyle's face was distorted with some emotional conflict. He looked up at the sky, raising his hands towards it. Was he about to call upon the Eternal Verities to send down a thunderbolt for the correction of the three stupefied Jeremiahs? Slowly his

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head sank, his hands descended. He had won.

"Ah-h-h-h!" It was a long sigh from Wilde. "They must pass him now. They simply *must*."

"You should try the meringue, F. E.," said Winston.

"Really good, is it?"

"Really good."

"Then I'll try it."

I formulated another question. "Excuse me, Mr. Wilde, but, if you won't think me impertinent, how is it you haven't been passed? You . . . well, you seem to be able to . . . you have clearly mastered the technique of . . ."

Wilde smiled sadly. "My difficulty is . . . charm."

"Charm?"

"The desire to say the charming thing to people, to tell them what they want to hear about themselves."

"But haven't you overcome that difficulty? Your speech before lunch . . ."

"I know, I know. But a careless moment . . . An unguarded impulse . . ."

Another long silence. I became conscious of a growing tension among my self-gagged fellow guests. Suddenly Dreiser turned towards Hilaire Belloc, speaking in low rapid tones. I could distinguish nothing, but as the monster behind Dreiser's chair remained silent, it was clear that Dreiser was relieving himself of something he really felt. He ceased, and Hilaire Belloc turned weightily on him.

"Mr. Dreiser, that you are modern in your habit of thought and practice of living, and that I am mediaeval in both, I shall not dispute. I care not by what formula you express the difference between you and myself. That it exists is my sole concern, and a theme for endless thanksgiving to the God whom you deny. But when you affirm that. . . ."

Clang!

"BUT WHEN YOU AFFIRM THAT I BELLOC AM PERSONALLY HOSTILE TO THE JEWS AND WISH THEM ILL YOU LIE."

The monster's jaws snapped to.

"Who's the liar now?" cried Dreiser.

A connected account of the next few minutes is impossible. The secret tension had exploded at Dreiser's cry, and most of the guests had sprung to their feet. Eliot hurried round the table to Belloc's support. Master Peter Robin screamed with excitement. Sir James Barrie cuffed him smartly. A private war of words was engaged in between William Gerhardi and Desmond MacCarthy; and from Carlyle's table a scream rose above the general hubbub, "You nasty, disgusting, vulgar, old wretch!" It was, I think, the voice of Beverley Nichols, or perhaps of Evelyn Waugh.

A sudden clang—I turned round, and there was poor Wilde, open-mouthed, collapsed in his chair, while above him his monster brayed—

"GENTLEMEN GENTLEMEN PLEASE GENTLEMEN GENTLEMEN."

The jaws of the monster snapped to. A hush descended on the scene.

"This is fine brandy, Winston," said Lord Birkenhead. Churchill nodded.

The rest of the lunch passed in silence. When it was over, Max Beerbohm offered to drive me back. He talked wonderfully to me all the way.

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IN MEMORY OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

by Margaret Bell

". . . but I tell you, my lord fool, out of this nettle danger, we pluck this flower safety."

For ten years these words have looked out from their simple setting in a gravestone in the communal cemetery of Avon, near Fontainebleau. They had appeared in front of Katherine Mansfield's book *Bliss*. She liked them and that is why today they stand above her grave.

On the afternoon of January 9th, 1923, just ten years ago, Katherine Mansfield's husband, John Middleton Murry, went over from London to spend a week with her in Fontainebleau, where she had been living at the Gurdjieff Institute for more than two months, trying to put into practice the ideas she had had for so long, "of another and far more truthful existence", and trying to cure herself of her terrible illness. She had written him on New Year's Eve, inviting him for this time: "On the 13th, our new theatre is to be opened. It will be a wonderful experience. . . ."

She missed the wonderful experience. At ten o'clock on the night of the 9th, she was seized with a fit of coughing worse than usual. At 10:30, her long fight against disease and against the disunion she had felt everywhere around her, was at an end. She died happily. Middleton Murry writes: "I have never seen nor shall I ever see anyone so beautiful as she was on that day".

Thirty-four years old; a third of them spent in a struggle against poverty, a fifth wasted by tuberculosis, all lived deeply and sincerely, whether in exaltation, whether in despair. The living of life to the fullest was her passion: "With all my soul I long for a real life, for truth and for real strength." The innumerable dyings one must endure in order to live anew! "I have to die to so much; I have to make such big changes. I feel the only thing to do is to get the dying over, to court it almost. . . . And then all hands to the business of being born again."

This was the conclusion of her wonderings about life and the mystery of it. Three years before, in the extremity of her suffering, she wrote in her journal: "Suffering must become Love. . . . I must pass from personal love to greater love. . . . The present agony will pass—if it doesn't kill. . . . As in the physical world, so in the spiritual world, pain does not last forever."

But the acuteness of it while it lasted was all but unbearable. And yet, when it was difficult to know where the physical agony began, where the spiritual, she was always conscious of this conviction, like a steady light gleaming, that eventually "Sorrow shall be changed into Joy". This transmutation was to be achieved through work and through a fuller yielding of herself to life: "To love more deeply, to feel oneself a part of life, not separate."

The disunion, apparent all through her youthful years and culminating with the War, was what brought such chaos of mind, what racked her spirit and laid waste her body.

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She felt confident that if she could attain the process by which the Spirit of life was contacted, her body would be healed and she would enter consciously into that *rapport* of which she had many fragmentary sensings. And she cried, "Oh Life, accept me—make me worthy, teach me".

What a multitude of obstacles must be surmounted before one could enter into Life! The cynicism of one's early years, the passing of judgement on the hypocrites, the liars, the self-seekers; the natural abhorrence of shoddiness and vulgarity—all must be accepted, must be made a part of life. To stand aside and pass judgement, to adopt a superior attitude, was to be self-righteous. How trivial, how immature!

This was one reason why she did not want her first book *In a German Pension* republished. Its cynicism is almost brutal. Written when she was only nineteen, it expresses "a phase of youthful bitterness and crude cynicism which I desire to disown forever". She was twenty-three when she realized that she wished to be finished with such immaturity. The War had begun, the hatred of Germany was at its height in England. Publishers, remembering the caustic criticism of the Germans in her book, made her handsome offers for it. It was then out of print, the original publisher having gone bankrupt, the plates having disappeared. She was greatly in need of money and the sum offered her looked like a veritable fortune, but she could not accept it. She would not add to the hatred of Germany by allowing the book to appear just then.

Too much hate in the world already. One must, somehow, try to avoid all thought of the War by going into beautiful, quiet places. She took a cottage in Buckinghamshire. There surely she could write with no disturbing sounds but the birds' songs and the friendly snuffle of the wind in the leaves. But she could not write. A barrier seemed to rise up between her and actual accomplishment. She could think out stories by the dozen, but that was all. The country sounds began to bother her; the wind in the eaves of the cottage, the barking of dogs. Then the fogs came and lay thick on the moors. She longed to be in London and could not overcome her nervous lack of repose. "I am never, never calm, even for an instant."

She realized that she had never been at ease in any one place. At home in New Zealand, after the five years spent in Queen's College, London, she had been utterly wretched. New Zealand was provincial while London represented to her all the intellectual life of the world. After much persuading, she had induced her father to allow her to return to England on a small allowance. She could make a living some way.

Making a living was not so easy, even though she played the 'cello very well and had a fair voice. She trudged the streets and sat in draughty corridors of music halls, while waiting for her writing to be recognized. Finally she was offered a small part in a travelling opera company. This meant living in cheap boarding houses, a kind of life she was quite unfitted for. As a result she fell ill and went to Germany to convalesce. It was while there that she wrote the series of sketches which were later published under the title *In a German Pension*. She had managed to sell them previously to the editor of *The New Age*, A. R. Orage, who was the first to recognize the quality of her writing.

She went back to London, to the society of "charming people". Now they did not seem quite real to her: "Pretty rooms and pretty people, pretty coffee and cigarettes out of a silver tankard. A sort of sham Meredith at-

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mosphere lurking. I was wretched". "I'd so much rather lean idly over a bridge and watch the boats and free, unfamiliar people."

Realities, honesty, the truth of things—from her very first remembrance she had had this craving for the "life of life". Sincere people, trees, the passing of a flock of swallows, the sunrise and the sounding sea, "so full of little laughs" on certain days—these were some of her delights. To loiter in a sunny garden held possibilities beyond expressing. But it must be a natural garden, cultivated for itself: "The French gardens are nothing but potential salad bowls."

Sometimes in the later years, she wondered if her passion for people had not made her ignorant of things she should have known. In college when she should have been thinking about great historical events, the situation of continents and countries and other important facts, what had she done? Sat and pictured her professors in their homes; set them in their living-rooms and surrounded them with the kinds of families they should have. A disastrous pastime for a college student; for when the crucial day arrived she couldn't, for the life of her, remember important dates or important happenings. About Anne Boleyn, for example. All she could bring to mind when questions of Anne Boleyn came up was the picture of this "lovely, *pure* creature stepping out of her quiet door into all the light and clamour". What more did one need to create the tragedy of this unfortunate girl, "looking back and seeing the familiar door shut upon her, with a little click, as it were—final"?

Such human incidents concerned the young New Zealander much more than epoch-making conferences, than geological or mathematical calculations. "I lived in the girls, the professor, the big, lovely building, the leaping fires in winter, the abundant flowers in summer." Impressionable youth? More than just this, I think. A deep sense of livingness coupled with an insatiable urge to get at the heart of life. Of one thing she was convinced—that much of life's mystery had to do with this thing of being constantly reborn. One must keep sloughing off the "old man" to prepare for the new.

Then came the question, "What if the new man will not live?" How was one to hold oneself open to the flow of life, to become one with it and remain one? Only in such a state of union could one ever accomplish anything. The touches that she had made at rare intervals made her avid for the full yielding: "Once fairly alight, how I'd blaze and burn!"

But there were many obstacles that prevented this absolute surrender: Poverty—the thwarting business of making shillings do the work of pounds; the shuddering cold of winter fogs creeping in through loose walls; the irk of domestic tasks; the weariness of a frail body, the racking pain of illness; most of all, the spiritual agony consequent on all these things. How to adjust herself, how to accept them all and make them a part of life, this was the problem to be met and solved. How to keep faith with the world at war and hatred poisoning men's minds. She had hours of torturing idleness when "the words just won't come". Why won't they come when she has so many stories to tell? Why this paralyzing inertia? But it must pass, one day, quite suddenly perhaps there will come a glow, a glimpse of "something ineffable—divine", life will flame through her, work cannot be stopped. Then the joy of having completed a story while possessed of this power! "There is nothing so marvellous in the world."

The day came, the stories were written. But even they came back. Was there no editor who thought them worth the publishing?

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But they must be worth it, there must be some place for them. Or was their truth too bitter, their sincerity too searching? "Can I not make myself felt as a real personal force?"

Her young brother came from New Zealand to serve in France. He spent a week with her in the house she and Murry had taken in St. John's Wood. What talks they had! "Do you remember this, Katie?" "I'll never forget that pink garden seat. Do you think we'll be allowed to sit on it in heaven?" Her childhood days in the sprawling, white, pillared house in New Zealand. There was complete understanding between her and this young brother Chummie. The week flew, soon it was time for Chummie to go to France.

"Suddenly he kisses her.

"'Good-bye, darling.'

"'Ah, why do you say that?'

"'Darling, goodbye . . . good-bye.'"

And now she has the harrowing hours of waiting for some word of him. She has not long to wait. Before even a month has gone, the word comes. Chummie has been killed.

That was in the autumn of 1915. A dreary, lifeless autumn, unbearable in England, unbearable especially in the drenched garden where they had talked, and in the little top room where she had planned with him how she would write of their childhood and put on the front page, "To my brother Leslie Heron Beauchamp". The fogs were thick, that autumn, the days raw. She could not get warm. So she closed the house in Acacia Road and went with her husband to Bandol in the South of France. But even there the sun was not bright enough to warm her frozen spirit. "Though he is lying in the middle of a little wood and I am still walking upright and feeling the sun and the wind from the sea, I am just as much dead as he is. The present and the future mean nothing to me."

No longer could she feel an eager curiosity when she was to meet new people, all desire to explore strange places left her. The natural result followed, she became ill. Murry had to go back to London and she was left alone. This was bad; it gave her too much time to brood. She imagined that the rheumatic pain from which she was suffering, was heart trouble. She feared it, yet she longed to die, so that she might join Chummie. But she might not die until she had written those recollections of their childhood. That was the "sacred debt" she owed him.

She bent every effort toward the discharge of this debt, but no words came. She just sat before her table, staring at the clean, white paper, staring at the bunch of red geraniums in the corner, staring past them through the window to the flowering almond-tree. Would she ever be able to write again? She was no further ahead than she was two months ago. Weeks passed, producing nothing. Then suddenly, as she had prayed it would, came the "flow".

"What is it that happens in that moment? It is timeless. In that moment the whole life of the soul is contained." A group of children came trooping. What would she call them? Isabel, Lottie, Kezia. . . . The first sunbeam slanted and the birds began; goldfinches, fantails, linnets. Whole hosts of New Zealand memories. Thus was started the long short story *Prelude*.

When she returned to England in April, it was finished. But she could find no place for it. The need for money was urgent. What should she do? Try to write the kind of things the public seemed to want? Not if such writing did not ring true. Above all, she must write the truth as she saw it, "simply, fully, freely, from my heart". But if the pub-

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lic did not want her truth? Just carry on until it did. Chekhov was not afraid to wait. Why should she be? To keep this idea before her, to keep faith with herself, this was her struggle in the face of constant disappointment. All her stories were returned. But there were compensations: her interest in people came back, she never knew when she was going to meet someone who belonged in her world. Great happiness in this. "I just felt that all was well and we understood each other. There was 'ease' between us."

She was living in a studio in Church Street, Chelsea, and Murry had a couple of rooms in Redcliffe Road, not far away. You walked past the Belgian pastrycook's and the delicatessen shop, or maybe you went in to buy a couple of *brioches* for tea and to have a word with Madame who was from Liége. Across the street was the Victoria Wine Company where you could get a bottle of Australian burgundy for half a crown. Later, perhaps, when half crowns were a little more plentiful; when you had sold a story. Just now there didn't seem to be any extra shillings about, let alone half crowns. So you stopped before the pawnbroker's window and wondered how much that old brooch with the garnets would bring. It wasn't as valuable as the one your grandmother had given you, but never, if you starved by inches, would you part with that. . . . Life was free and easy around the Fulham Road and if the greengrocer tacked on an extra halfpenny when you were foolish enough to wear your best coat marketing, why, that was your fault.

There was scarcely any butter to be had and cream had long since disappeared. Since sugar and meat had to be bought by the ounce, the thing to do was to go without for several days and then have a feast at the end of the week. Things were going badly in France and bombs rained on London with the coming of every full moon. How to be in a world of war yet not of it? How to feel the fullness of love with everyone talking hate? This thought outweighed all consideration of shillings, necessary as it was. To read the hypocrisy of statesmen, the exaggerated eloquence of the world's leaders poured out in praise of those who kill! How to keep one's sense of proportion, one's honesty and one's humour. Thank heaven, humour did bubble up: "I have just thoroughly cleaned and attended to my fountain pen. If after this, it leaks, it is *no* gentleman."

The strain was too much; she caught a chill which developed into pleurisy. Her doctor advised the South of France. She was happy at this prospect, the South of France meant peace and quietude to her. "I see a little house with flower patches under the windows and the soft mass of a haystack at the back. . . . The sea runs very high. In the sharp, metallic light, the rocks have a reddish tinge . . . every moment the light changes. Even as I write, it is no longer hard. Some small, white clouds top the mountain like tossed-up smoke." She got her passport and set off joyously for France.

She had failed to realize that in the two years since she had been there, conditions had entirely changed. She had an appalling journey. She felt wretchedly ill, so ill that she consciously kept pushing all thought of its seriousness from her mind. Once in Bandol she would gain strength quickly. But the Bandol she had known no longer existed. The once beautiful town was now slovenly from neglect, the civilized French food she had enjoyed was now unspeakably bad. Well, even so, the rocks remained and the sounding sea. Soon she would be well.

Soon she was not well. Each day she grew weaker. "I can barely walk, can't think, don't

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dare to go to sleep, because if I do, I know I'll lie awake through the night and that is my horror." This was too serious. She must not be so. She must not think so much about the racking pain in her left shoulder; she would grow morbid. She dashed off a limerick about it:

A doctor who came from Jamaica
Said: "This time I'll mend her or break her.
I'll ply her with serum;
And if she can't bear 'em,
I'll call in the next undertaker."

Her loneliness and the feeling of spiritual isolation that she had added to her fatigue. She could not overcome the fear that she was seriously ill. She struggled to overcome it, but, one morning, she woke with a deeper cough than usual and with a strange taste in her mouth. She was paralyzed with fear. This was really serious, this was consumption. She faced things: Did she want to die? Not just yet. Not because she was only twenty-eight, but because she did not wish to be away from Murry if she died, and more particularly because she had not done the work she had planned. "*That's what matters*. How unbearable it would be to die—leave scraps—bits . . . nothing real finished."

As soon as she was able, she began preparations for her return to England. Vexatious days followed, the authorities kept hesitating. Travel was not easy to arrange in time of war. At last she started, at last she reached Paris. But on what a day! On the day on which the long range bombardment began, when dozens of persons were killed while worshipping in church. Utterly exhausted by her illness and by the frightful journey, she had to submit to the questioning of more authorities who refused to allow her to leave for England. For three weeks she remained in Paris, on every day of which she was obliged to visit various offices in order to obtain permission either to remain or to depart.

When she arrived in London, her friends were shocked at her appearance. It did not seem possible that four months of illness could work such havoc on a human body. She went to Murry's two ground-floor rooms in the Redcliffe Road. She liked this blowsy, old street. There was a freedom in it that more self-respecting streets did not have. Its inhabitants were artists, writers, cranks of sorts. A red-haired woman who played Chopin extraordinarily well and carried a dove on her little finger when she went out occupied a top studio, a few doors away. She called the dove Gabriel until, one day, he surprised her by laying an egg. Across the street lived a girl who later was to attract the attention of the reading world with a book supposed to have been written when she was nine. An artist walked the roofs at night, seeking inspiration. Nearly every evening, a lame young fellow in a shabby, velvet coat, wandered in from the Fulham Road, playing a violin. The red-headed Chopin player invited him up to her studio, one night and for two hours, the whole street sat with heads sticking out of the windows, listening. Even the beery old charwomen forgot their area gossip and the cat's meat man emptied his cart gratuitously in the effort to silence the mangy throng that mewed around him.

Unhampered, peaceful days, except for one's constant awareness of the War which was reaching its climax, and for one's racking cough. She would have liked to stay there until the War was over; she could write there. But the sun did not linger in the gloomy, ground-floor rooms and she coughed too much. She had acceptances at last, the first in three years. Austin Harrison wanted *Bliss* for his *English Review*, *Arts and Let-*

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ters wanted *Pictures* and *The Man Without a Temperament.* The longer story, *Prelude,* could not find a home, but the Woolfs, who were running the Hogarth Press, had brought it out in a little blue paper book. It might have been lying hidden in her desk as far as the press was concerned. It was completely ignored. More gratifying than any critics' comments, however, was the exclamation of the typesetter who, on reading the story, had cried, "My, but these kids are *real*!"

About the middle of May she went to Cornwall where the sun was warm, and Murry began house-hunting in Hampstead. These constant separations were very painful to her. What was the use of being married if one had to live here, the other there, three-fourths of the time? One felt like a rudderless ship, dodging about at the mercy of every wind; one missed the security of a home. Visions of the New Zealand terraces, the aloe trees and the sloping garden ending with a golden wall of nasturtiums came vividly before her. How she longed for the sense of safety that they meant! But New Zealand was more than 11,000 miles away and she had once run away from that too stultifying safety.

Still, the restlessness persisted, consequently work did not go well. She did not seem able to get into touch with her mind. "I am standing gasping in one of those disgusting telephone boxes and I can't 'get through'." She was conscious of a freezing isolation of spirit which not only prevented present work but made everything that she had done before seem wrong, false somehow. "Musically speaking, it has not been—in the middle of the note."

But there were happy hours when she got back to London, to the house in Hampstead that Murry had succeeded in finding. A home at last, with a cat in it, a real kitchen and outside a garden bursting with red and arrogant geraniums. "If I lie on the grass, they positively shout at me, 'Look at her lying on *our* grass, pretending she lives here . . . she is a stranger, an alien; she is nothing but a little girl sitting on the Tinakori hills and dreaming'."

Dangerous thoughts. They brought back memories of Chummie and they started stirring again that vague *wanderlust* which kept her spirit jogging here and there. In spite of this, she was happy in the Hampstead house. She had interesting friends, harmonious surroundings and the urge for work. What did it matter that the old hot iron kept burning in her lung, as long as she had this urge and the energy to enjoy those friends? What did it matter how few the years?

The urge was there but not the ceaseless energy. "I have discovered that I cannot burn the candle at one end and write a book with the other." This meant that she must go away again the moment autumn came. The War was over now and travel not so difficult. And San Remo was beautiful, and beautiful the cottage at Ospedaletti where she hoped to heal her lung. A delight to realize that she could still appreciate the sun and Southern scents: "Still to taste the warm sunlight that melted in your mouth; still to smell the white, spicy scent of the rosemary growing in little tufts among the red rocks close to the brim of the sea."

As long as she felt these things, she need not fear stagnation; and as long as she could do another thing she had been able to do of late—make real certain fantasies of her imagination. Sometimes these fantasies were so vivid they eclipsed in importance the actual details of her days. They always came to her at night, just before she slept. They were not merely the pleasant series of pictures that often come to one at such a time; it was as

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if, the moment her body rested, her spirit slipped away to different places. Not only was she conscious of all the happenings at these times, her awareness seemed heightened. No dreams, these, but something much more real, a kind of "consolation prize" for all her suffering. Not incomprehensible either; when one has suffered greatly, one becomes more sensitized, one should *know* more. It was as if, for these few scattering moments, she were gifted with true vision.

The result was a strengthening of her convictions about truth: "Honesty is the only thing one seems to prize beyond life, love, death, everything. . . . O you who come after me, will you believe it? At the end, *truth* is the only thing worth having; it's more thrilling than love, more joyful and more passionate. It simply can*not* fail." But scattering visions, no matter how real, cannot satisfy completely the hunger of a human soul. There were days of torturing loneliness, when the roaring of the sea outside her window was insufferable, when her sense of isolation was so great it made her "faint with misery".

The doctor came, told her she must remain indoors for two months, not attempt to walk at all. An invalid! The irony of it, when all she asked of life was to *live*! To have to stay in bed all day and hear the constant noise and clatter of unthinking French people! To lie there and wonder what was going on at home, what new people had turned up, what adventures the old ones were having. "When one is ill and far away in a remote bedroom, all that happens *beyond* is marvellous."

The coming of the postman was the great event of the day. Often he passed by the house, but there was always that quickening sense of expectancy just before it was time for him to arrive. One day he brought great news; her book of short stories, *Bliss,* was sold. How thrilling! She must see the advance cheque and send it off to the bank with her own hands. Pure childishness, she knew, but what of it?

This good fortune was like soothing ichor running through her veins; it made her more tolerant of the noise about her, of the insensitive people with their coarse jests and coarse laughter, who banged doors and shouted through the house. It made her eager to go on working too; hundreds of stories still remained unwritten, and there was her regular article for the *Athenæum*, which Murry was now editing. Book criticisms. How few books were worth the criticizing! They were not true, most of them seemed to have been written "more from pastime than from passion". Their characters had no life, they seemed never "to renew themselves, or to *Grow*". How could she express what she knew to be the true function of literature? It was rather difficult to say simply. She must say it. So she wrote: "The greatest literature, the literature that scarcely exists, has not merely an aesthetic object nor merely a didactic object, but in addition a creative object; that of subjecting its readers to a real and at the same time illuminating experience. Major literature is, in short, an initiation into truth."

Perhaps her readers would not like such pedantic preaching, perhaps they would prefer that she gave them merely outlines of the new books, said things that they could quote when they went to tea or dinner; quick summings-up of the plots, concise analyses of the different characters. Never mind; she must ignore them if this was all they wanted. She didn't always have to be solemn, at any rate. And she dashed off a generalization about the large band of writers "who will guarantee to produce the same thrill with variations for you, once, twice, or thrice

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yearly. Their great aim is never to show a sign of change—to make their next novel as good as their last but no better—to take their readers for an excursion, as it were, but always to put up at the same hotel, where they know the waiters' faces and the way to the bathroom and the shape of the biscuits that accompany the cheese".

Writing of Joseph Hergesheimer's *Linda Condon*, she said: ". . . It is his (the author's) passion for registering every pink-silk box of black chocolates, every cocktail, bath, extract, perfume, sugared fig, quilted bed cover, web of lingerie that in our opinion at first obscures and finally smothers Mr. Hergesheimer's central idea. Great, brilliant chunks of this repulsive world of the very rich are hurled at us until Linda is scarcely visible, is pale as a pocket-handkerchief."

Before very long, she was acclaimed as a real critic. More important still, as a real creator. *Bliss* caused a mild furor among the people competent to judge. By the others—those who prefer always to have their cookies sugar-coated—it was considered cruel and bitter. Galsworthy, Wells, and de la Mare, such men as "knew the difference between cruelty and clarity", were lavish in their praise. Their letters seemed to give her actual physical strength to write the stories for her next book, *The Garden Party*.

"I'm ever so much better," she wrote to a friend, "and can walk and talk, but a part of my left lung is gone and that means my heart is not a boxer's heart and I'll never be able to climb trees or run or swim again. Isn't that a bit steep of Almighty God? I'm always praising him too, but there you are. I'm terribly happy all the same and I don't *think* the world has lost an athlete, darling, do you?"

How she worked during those next six months! No question now about having to coax her muse. Work flowed, she burned with energy. There were many sleepless nights. If the story was not finished at normal sleeping time, she kept on at it until it was. Then for hours she could not sleep because of her exhilaration. "There is no feeling to be compared with the feeling of having written and finished a story. I did not go to sleep, but nothing mattered. There it was, *new* and complete."

In between working times, she allowed herself to dream a little: A charming cottage in the country, not too far from London, where she and Murry could potter around in the garden, read aloud to each other in the evenings, have the right people down for week-ends; a few good pictures, music, books, lots of books. "And I'd like a child as well—a baby boy; *mais je demande trop*." Later on, when she knew for certain that she would never have a child of her own, she dreamed of adopting one, a Russian baby whom she would call Anton. She would bring him up as her own and Madame Chekhov would be his godmother.

It looked as if part of the dream at least might be realized. *The Garden Party* was sold and published. Now all the hostile critics fell into line with the others and all piped in the same key, "The most remarkable short-story writer of her generation in England". Fame at last. Floods of letters from persons unknown to her and from those long established in her profession. How difficult to answer them, to say all that she felt! To Galsworthy she wrote, "I scarcely know how to thank you. Your noble, generous praise is such precious encouragement that all I can do is try to deserve it. I want to promise you that I shall never do less than my best, that I will try not to fail you. But this sounds superficial and far from my feeling. . . ."

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No matter what she wrote, she never could express the gratitude that she felt. She would try to make up for this by writing very fully to the unknown budding authors who sent their effusions to her for criticism. She gave them frank advice, encouragement and hope. Murry says of her, "She was utterly generous; when she gave herself to life, to love, to some spirit of truth which she served, she gave royally". In all her letters to these unknown aspirants, she drove home her convictions, "It's truth we are after, no less".

Letters came from editors too: A letter from the editor of the *Sketch*, asking for work. "I'm to do 12 spasms of 2000 words each for Clement Shorter", of the *Sphere*. Very gratifying after her waiting years, yet very challenging. Would she be able to discharge all these obligations? On the strength of them she did not type her next few stories but found someone to do them for her at 7 francs a thousand words. She went out and "bought myself a sweet-pretty-hat-it-was-indeed-miss, and walked away in it, carrying my dead one in a paper bag".

One thing she was certain of—she could not possibly agree to the dozens of requests of unknown admirers asking to meet her. Terrifying, this; she had not the strength, for one thing; for another, she could give no more of herself than she had given in her work. Her own truth must be faced: She could never get strong until she had made some effort apart from all the fag of treatments, to cure herself; until she plucked all the vanity from her soul, disciplined her mind not to sink into despair, learned the laws of life. "The more I know of life the more I realize it is profoundly influenced by certain laws, no matter how many people ignore them. If we obey them, our work goes well; we get our desire. It's like studying the tides before we put out to sea in our fishing boat. We are all sailors bending over a great map. We ought to choose the weather for our journey."

All this rushing back and forth—England in summer, Switzerland sometimes—Italy in winter; all the milk and eggs that added a little flesh to her body, all the soundings, all the tappings on her chest; all the X-ray treatments in Paris that cost more than she could afford, of what avail were they if she felt "divided" in herself? She was convinced that the cause of her trouble lay much deeper than her poor, emaciated lung. What confusion to bring this fact into the open, to look it squarely in the face! Yet how futile not to face it, even though the facing brought an inner torment much harder to bear than the humiliation of her physical weakness. That was hard enough, heaven knew; humiliating beyond words to see older people start toward her protectingly when she appeared in the public rooms of hotels where so much of her life was spent.

What was she to do about it? How save the little life that remained in her? "Do I believe in medicine alone? No, never. In science alone? No, never. It seems to me childish and ridiculous to suppose one can be cured like a cow, *if one is not a cow*."

For five years she had been looking for someone who agreed with her in this; she had found no one. The failure of her quest diminished her own conviction not a whit. Go on searching while there still was time. Of what use was the shadow of life that she was living now, separated from her husband until their relationship was only a kind of dream of what-might-be? Separated now from her desire to work because of a feeling of incompleteness? "Anything I write in this mood will be full of sediment." Why hesitate to follow any clue that seemed to her reasonable?

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Gurdjieff was the clue. At Fontainebleau he had established a community, a kind of "spiritual brotherhood", the object of which was to achieve spiritual regeneration. Katherine's heart bounded when she heard of this community. Was not spiritual regeneration just what she had been seeking for years? She knew that she must attain it before she could do any more work—an inner purification, which would make her vision "crystal clear". She had reached an impasse, her mind was arid, her spring of life clogged. Even supposing some miracle happened which would give her physical strength, she knew she could not write any more until she had entirely changed her perspective.

Why not join the Gurdjieff Institute? It was a risk, of course, after all her years of apathy, but surely a risk worth taking. How could she be sure that it was worth taking? So far, the community was largely experimental. She must decide. This wavering would never do, it made her a nervous wreck. She decided to join. Her decision paralyzed her. "I am so terrified of what I am going to do. All the voices out of the Past say 'Don't do it!' "

But the voices out of the past were dead. She had come to this conclusion long ago.

Toward the end of 1922, she entered the Gurdjieff Institute. She was only a shadow, her voice rose scarcely above a whisper, she wavered when she walked. I met a woman who was in the institute at the time. She said of Katherine Mansfield: "She was thoroughly beautiful, with such gentle manners and loving ways. Love and generosity radiated from her. There was no doubt of her having attained the inner purity she had always desired so passionately. An exquisite creature, now too weak to make her voice heard when she spoke."

The life at the institute was strange to her and arduous. The fifty or sixty members did all the work connected with it. This meant the feeding of animals, the taking care of market produce, the preparation of meals. Above all, one had to readjust completely one's preconceived ideas about life. It meant an absolute sloughing off of the old order in order to prepare for the new. There were no mental laggards there, just as there could be no physical ones. One was whirled along at a great rate. "But I cannot tell you what a joy it is to be living with people who are strange and quick and not afraid to be themselves. It's a kind of supreme airing."

A relaxation too. Very soon she began to be conscious of a deep, inner calm and a flooding of love through her such as she had never before experienced. It was as if her long search for "union" was at last accomplished. She did not wish to do any writing until spring came. By that time she would have become adjusted to her new life, would have been at ease with the "new man" she had become. In the meantime, she felt great happiness and was content.

But the "new man" demanded a new abode. Not Fontainebleau, not England, not even New Zealand 11,000 miles away. All of these, and more, perhaps. To yield herself completely to this demand, she must relinquish in its entirety the old man. To find her life, she must lose it.

The losing and the finding were accomplished suddenly. On that night, January 9th, she yielded joyously to the necessity for full renunciation. Out of the nettle danger, she had plucked at last the flower safety.

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CHRONICLE AND COMMENT

Sussex Doom

WITHIN a very few weeks now *Cold Comfort Farm*, by Stella Gibbons, will be published in this country by Longmans, and all readers of English fiction are hereby advised not to miss it. For *Cold Comfort Farm* is a book the like of which we very seldom see, since it belongs, and not remotely, with such books as *Jonathan Wild*, *Northanger Abbey*, and *Zuleika Dobson*, and with that skit of Stephen Leacock's of which at the moment we can only recall that the hero leapt to his horse and rode off in all directions.

It would be far easier to quote half the book than to give any idea what it is like. Perhaps it most resembles a genial nightmare brought on by intensive reading of current fiction; for while it is first and foremost a parody of those great grim novels of life on Sussex farms, it also contains innumerable telling shots at D. H. Lawrence, Brontë biographers, novels of London's Bohemia, and the stream-of-consciousness school. You will find in it overtones of Hardy, Sheila Kaye-Smith, May Sinclair, Julian Green, V. Sackville-West, Eden Phillpotts, and the brothers Powys.

But this is a paltry list. In 307 pages, Miss Gibbons goes after almost all the contemporary poses and pulverizes them. Her heroine is one Flora Poste, an orphan who, shortly after the death of her parents, takes refuge with a branch of her family, the Starkadders, who live on Cold Comfort Farm, near the village of Howling on the Sussex downs. Flora has been an intensive reader of novels, and she knows what to expect, but the Starkadders ("There have always been Starkadders at Cold Comfort Farm" rings like a refrain throughout the book) exceed the wildest expectation. There is an old mad matriarch in an upper room (who saw something nasty, never identified, in the woodshed before she was two); her daughter Judith, moody and wild; and countless male Starkadders of every degree of relationship, of whom one is a religious fanatic, another the elemental male who seduces every girl in the countryside, and others simple-minded; and there is a shy child of nature, Elfine, who darts about the downs like a wild thing.

Now Flora, although romantic, has one quality rarely found in any character in a novel of today: commonsense. She is undeterred by the sententious and ungrammatical country proverbs which are always being shot at her, "Curses like rookses come home to rest in bosomses and barnses" and "When apples grow on the sukebind ye may see lust buy hissen a wedding garment" interest her, but do not blind her to the fact that few of the sinister aspects of Cold Comfort Farm could remain sinister if subjected to the light of reason. So the slavey who is brought to bed of a child whenever the sukebind (strange, fatal flower!) blooms hears from Flora the gospel according to Stopes; Seth, the mindless, elemental male, is sent off to become a talkie-star; Elfine, the little wildflower of the downs, dressed and coiffed by experts in London, is led to the altar instead of deserted there; Aunt Ada Doom gets a

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psychoanalyst, and catalogues from travel agencies. In short, there is no grim, sad situation that does not dissolve before Flora's bright commonsense like a ghost before the sunrise.

Not content with clearing up most of the traditional novel-dilemmas, as all of us, pushed too far, have yearned to do from time to time, Miss Gibbons offers a number of other novelties no less sensible. When she dives into a paragraph of fine writing as, in conscientious imitation of her models, she frequently does, she generously takes care that we shall not overlook it—prefacing it, according to her estimation of its excellence, by one, two or three asterisks. As an instance of this technic:—

> . . . Flora gazed up searchingly at the windows of the farmhouse. * * * They were dead as the eyes of fishes, reflecting the dim, pallid blue of the fading west. . . . The livid silver tongues of the early stars leaped between the shapes of the chimney-pots, backwards and forwards, like idiot children dancing to a forgotten tune.

It is fatal to begin to quote. Here is the history of Cold Comfort Farm in brief:—

> The farmhouse was a long, low building, two-storied in parts. Other parts of it were three-storied. Edward the Sixth had originally owned it in the form of a shed in which he housed his swineherds, but he had grown tired of it, and had had it rebuilt in Sussex clay. Then he pulled it down. Elizabeth had rebuilt it with a good many chimneys in one way and another. The Charleses had let it alone; but William and Mary had pulled it down again and George the First had rebuilt it. George the Second, however, burned it down. George the Third added another wing. George the Fourth had pulled it down again.

And then there are the thoughts of Aunt Ada Doom, thoughts like drowsy yaks rubbing against the walls of her room:—

> You told them you were mad. You had been mad since you saw something nasty in the woodshed, years and years and years ago. If any of them went away . . . you would get much madder. It was unfortunate in some ways but useful in others. . . . The woodshed incident had twisted something in your child-brain, seventy years ago.
>
> And seeing that it was because of that incident that you sat here ruling the roost and having five meals a day brought up to you as regularly as clockwork, it hadn't been a bad break for you, that day you saw something nasty in the woodshed.

Strengthened and purged by *Cold Comfort Farm*, we can face with fortitude another half-century of novels of the English countryside. Never again will the sad fate of country girls in the springtime overwhelm us. We shall be able to murmur to ourselves: "The first of May brought a burst of summer weather. All the trees and hedges came into full leaf over-night; and from behind the latter, in the evenings, cries could be heard of: 'Nay, doan't 'ee, Jem', and 'Nay, niver do that, soul', from village maidens who were being seduced."

Mr. Galsworthy's England and Mr. Lewis's America

THE award of the Nobel Prize for Literature to Mr. Galsworthy has been passed over by the British Press with singularly little comment. Whether this is because his latest novel, *Flowering Wilderness,* has received only lukewarm appreciation in London (its motivation depends in part on an Englishman's loss of caste when at the pistol's point he forswears Christianity for Mohammedanism); or because he has been talked of so often for the Prize that the actual award came as something of an anticlimax; or simply because he is less popular in his own

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KATHERINE MANSFIELD

Her death at the age of thirty-four occurred ten years ago this month, but as one of the most remarkable of modern story writers her reputation has increased with the passing of time. A commemorative article, by Margaret Bell, appears on page 36 of this issue.

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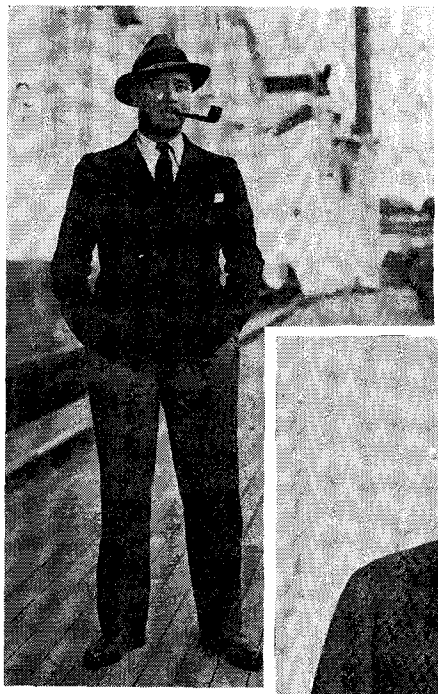
AUTHORS AT SEA



A new group of informal portraits by Paul Cwojdzinski, ship's photographer of the "Europa".

Upper left, Robert Benchley; upper right, Lion Feuchtwanger; center, Joseph Hergesheimer; below, Lewis Mumford.

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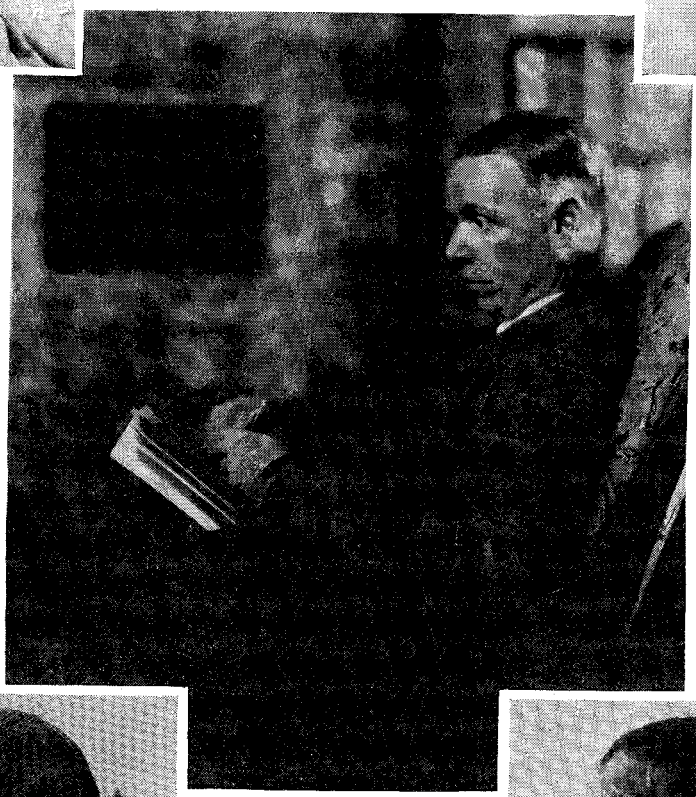
A LITERARY MISCELLANY

Left, Burton Rascoe, whose "Titans of Literature" has recently appeared; right, Ogden Nash, author of "Hard Lines"; below, Sinclair Lewis, whose latest novel, "Ann Vickers", is to be published this month.



Left, Isabel Patterson, the Herald-Tribune book critic, whose novel "Never Ask the End", reviewed in this issue, is the Literary Guild choice for January; right, Anna Maria Johnston, the original of the "Woman of the Red Leaf" in Janet Lewis's fine novel "The Invasion" *(see page 57).*

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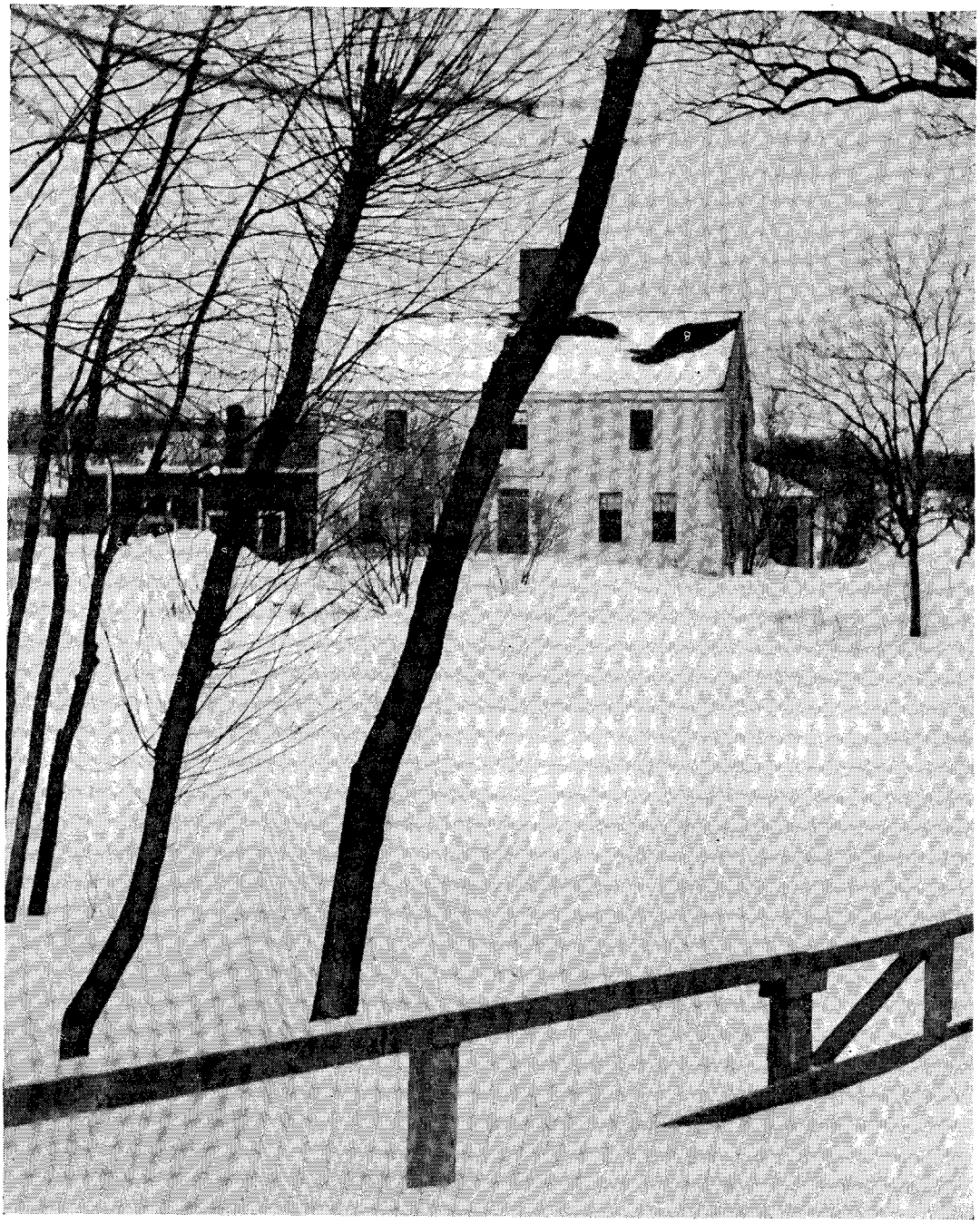

THE SCENE OF WHITTIER'S "SNOWBOUND"

The little New England house about which John Greenleaf Whittier wrote the poem that every American schoolchild knows. A literary snow scene by Sherril Schell.

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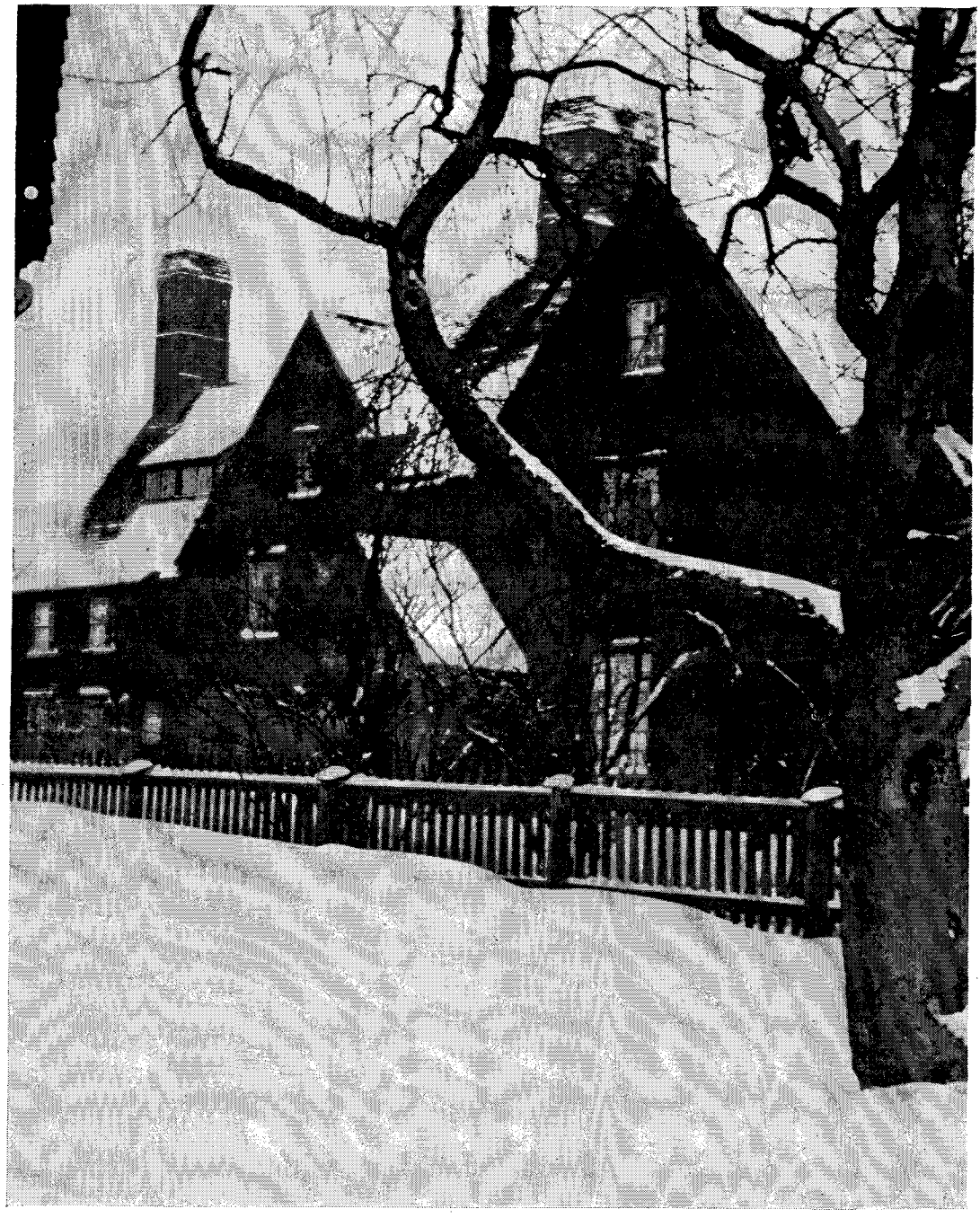

THE HOUSE OF THE SEVEN GABLES

At Salem, Massachusetts, which gave Nathaniel Hawthorne the title for one of his best loved works. Another literary snow scene by Sherril Schell.

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FOUR PORTRAITS BY WYNDHAM LEWIS

The author of "Time and Western Man" and "The Apes of God" is also an artist, and above are his conceptions of Stella Benson (upper left), Rebecca West (upper right), G. K. Chesterton (lower right), and himself (lower left). From a portfolio entitled "Thirty Personalities and a Self Portrait" published in London by Desmond Harmsworth.

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T. E. LAWRENCE

Otherwise known as T. E. Shaw, whose translation of the "Odyssey" is one of the fine books of the winter season. From the portrait by Sir William Rothenstein made in 1920, which suggests the personality of this extraordinary Englishman as does none of the very few published photographs. (From "The Portrait Drawings of William Rothenstein", published by the Viking Press.)

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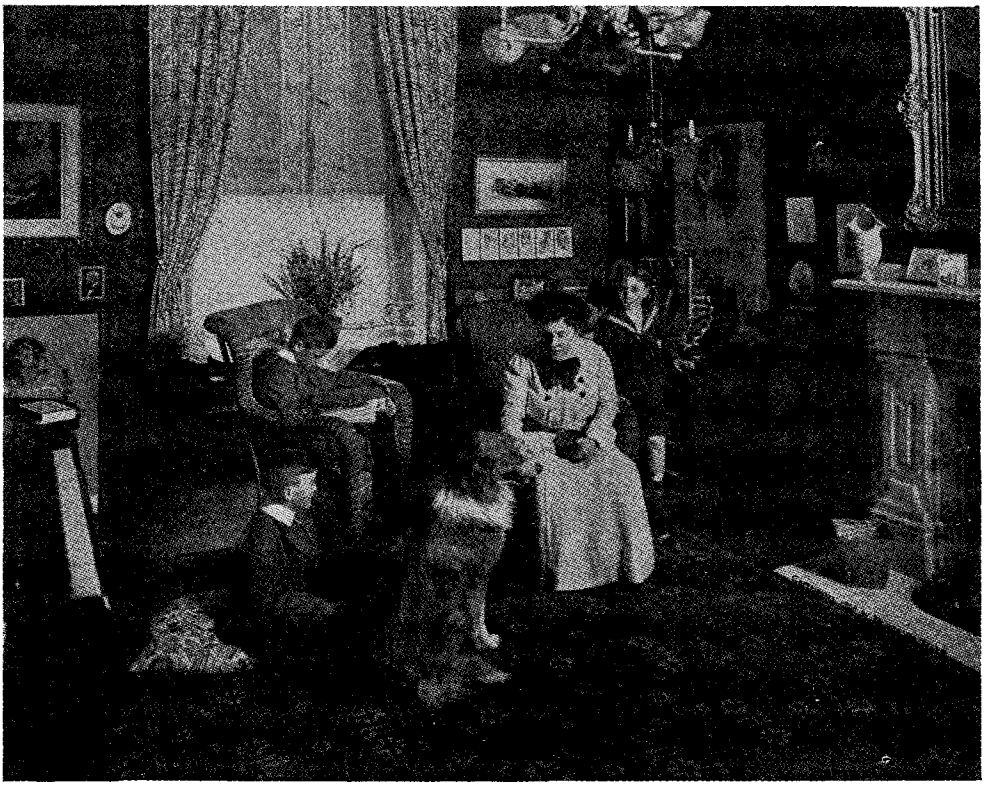

A PAGE FROM THE BOOKMAN'S PAST

(Continuing the series of pictures from old files of "The Bookman"; early portraits of Theodore Dreiser, Edith Wharton, and David Graham Phillips have been republished in recent numbers.)

Above, Mary Roberts Rinehart and her three sons: a photograph which appeared in the July, 1909, number of "The Bookman", when "The Man in Lower Ten" was enjoying its great popular success. Interested readers may amuse themselves by guessing which of the three boys is Stanley Rinehart, the publisher.

Left, Sinclair Lewis as he appeared to "Bookman" readers in May, 1914, when "The Bookman" reviewed his first novel, "Our Mr. Wrenn". A recent photograph of Lewis appears on page 51 preceding.

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country than he is, for instance, in America, it would be difficult to say. In any case, the London *Times* passed the event by with no editorial comment and only a short news dispatch; the *Morning Post* was content with a note on the general theme "No living writer among us is more completely representative of British letters"; the *Daily Telegraph* said that the award "accords with the fact that we no longer criticize his work, but accept it without question as the most valid assessment and interpretation of certain English types"; and both the *Observer* and the *Sunday Times* were completely silent on the subject. Among the monthlies, J. C. Squire's *London Mercury* was the coldest, devoting its note chiefly to a lament that the perennial recommendation of Thomas Hardy for the honour had never taken effect. Among the weekly reviews, the *New Statesman and Nation* quietly called the award "overdue", and *Everyman* spoke of honouring a writer "who is in all essentials eminently English". Only the gentleman who signs himself "Janus" in the *Spectator* hinted at an explanation of the perfunctory nature of all these comments. After clearing himself with patriots by saying "I can think of no living English writer who could rightly have been preferred", he continues:—

> But the vogue of the *Forsyte Saga* and the later novels is much greater on the Continent than here. . . . I once tried to explain to a Berlin luncheon party that after all old Jolyon and his brothers stood only for a limited section of English pre-War society, and Michael and Fleur for as limited a section of post-War, but I know I carried no conviction. Galsworthy's England was the only one that mattered.

In this last paragraph, perhaps, lies the true explanation of England's lack of enthusiasm toward her newest Nobel Prize winner. The rest of the world, and notably America, has developed an unusually sincere appreciation for Mr. Galsworthy's novels; from them it has built up a private picture of England and the English people; and this picture, representative or not, is unacceptable to the Englishman of 1932. Here is a notion which, if true, finds a peculiar parallel in the award of the Nobel Prize for Literature to an American two years ago: for was not much of the adverse American criticism of the choice of Sinclair Lewis also accounted for by the fact that his critics blamed him for having given a distorted picture of his country to the rest of the world?

"The Invasion" Continues

On another page of this issue we are printing a photographic portrait of Anna Maria Johnston, the second "Woman of the Red Leaf" of Janet Lewis's fine first novel, *The Invasion*. The dignified old face shows plainly her Ojibway blood; the figures on the dress she wears were, doubtless, one of the minute red patterns she loved.

Michigan and particularly the "peninsula amoena" of its state seal, has taken *The Invasion* to its heart. Lovers of the "Sault Country" are delighted to find their history, traditions, and landscape celebrated here in a way which promises to preserve for the children of the fast-vanishing settlers a sense of their past. Ex-Governor Chase S. Osborn of Michigan reviewed the book for the Sault Ste. Marie *Evening News*, in a full newspaper page of rejoicing that the country and the Indians should have been so fortunate as to find their historian in Miss Lewis. "Around them [the Johnstons] as types", he says, "is builded the story of *The Invasion*, which portrays vividly the Indian, then his first contacts with the whites, then the blendings in half-bloods and quarter-bloods, and finally the gradual racial triumph of the white. But the book is much more than that. It is in one

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sense a pageant; and in another it is pure history . . . and always it is a subtly charming story."

But the book's conquests are by no means confined to Michigan. The story of the Indians and the white men was one that repeated itself everywhere on the continent, and readers in Maine and Virginia, in California and Texas, are finding *The Invasion* as true a record of the intimate history of their forbears as the Michiganders.

The Holmes Legend

VINCENT STARRETT'S essay on *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes* in the CHRISTMAS BOOKMAN has involved us in a literary problem of great gravity and perplexity. The magazine was not out of our hands a week before a correspondent had raised two questions which were beyond the scholarship of the staff *Holmes* expert.

For example, [he writes] it always struck me as remarkable and delightful that neither Holmes nor Watson ever seemed to have the slightest thought about whether business was good or not. There is no evidence that either felt depressed or alarmed when clients or patients were few, or that they exulted when demand for their services became brisk.

Was the Christian name of Dr. Watson ever revealed?

The first question does not appear to have occurred to other commentators, who have been, it seems, cloistered men, indifferent to the business cycles eddying around their secluded cells. The second, we are now able to throw some light on, though only partially and with due caution. It was broached first, as far as our present knowledge goes, by an English writer, Mr. S. C. Roberts, in his *Prolegomena* published in the spring of 1931. Mr. Roberts's speculations have been carried forward in two books recently published in England which Mr. Roberts, as a specialist in the *Holmes* field, reviews in the London *Observer*. The pertinent part of the review follows:

Here we touch upon the intricate question of the Watson canon. Mr. Blakeney's general view that "all the stories record true events in the life of Holmes, but that the collections in *His Last Bow* and *The Case Book* come to us through the hand of an editor" is commendably cautious, but we confess that we regard with some misgiving his desire for a J. M. Robertson in the Watson field, "sifting the accretions of the pseudo-Watson from the hand of the veritable John Henry". The prospect of the chaos of textual disintegration which might result from the work of such a commentator is one to which we cannot look forward with equanimity. Mr. Blakeney should reflect on the course taken by Homeric criticism in recent years and, in particular, upon the fact that a distinguished scholar, whom his severest critic would never have accused of conservatism, was led to emphasize the "increasing number of critics who believe in an original unity of authorship and design". A minute example may be taken from Mr. Bell's book, now before us. The title of the work, in accordance with custom, appears on the title-page, the half-title, and the jacket. Each of the three titles shows variants, in wording or punctuation, from the other two. Are we here to discern the work of a deutero- and a trito-Bell?

A phrase in the sentence quoted above from Mr. Blakeney is an instance of the need of scrupulous accuracy in critical investigation. In the canon there is no record, so far as we are aware, of Watson's second name, though the combination "John Henry" was put forward conjecturally in our *Prolegomena*. However keenly we may be gratified by Mr. Blakeney's "veritable", we are bound to insist, as Holmes would have done, upon the distinction between objective data and legitimate surmise.

Mr. Bell, on the other hand, protests against this particular conjecture on the ground that Newman joined the Church of Rome about seven years before Watson was born, and that Mrs. Watson, as a devout Tractarian, would not have named her son after him. This does not

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convince us; long after his secession Newman remained an object of reverence and affection in the hearts of many Anglicans.

We present this latest information on the subject in the double hope that it may not only be of some modest assistance to our correspondent, but that it may encourage other readers to contribute to the problem any private information they may possess.

Titans of Literature

THE virtues of Burton Rascoe's *Titans of Literature*—the freshness and verve of the writing, the independence of view—have been enthusiastically celebrated by the reviewers, and the book we understand has begun to find a public. The reviewers have pointed out that young people just waking to literature are more likely to be stimulated to forage for themselves by Mr. Rascoe's vigour and gusto than by class-room manuals, even if all the major European writers are not treated with an equal portion of the vividness and infectious interest with which he recorded the early years of the past decade. With this we agree, and would urge *Titans of Literature* as a book likely to give nothing but benefit to literary aspirants. They will find the main stream of literature reported with some eccentric judgements and some monumental obtuseness, just as in *A Bookman's Daybook* they would see the period through a decidedly restricted viewpoint—and it is more serious to be blind to Dante and Milton than to Babbitt and More—but they will have as their guide a most lively and companionable mind never wearied of searching out the joy that lies in books. Mr. Rascoe is so eagerly responsive to the dominant mood of his day that his introduction will probably provide better than any other single source that immediacy of contact with masterpieces which is the beginning of true literary education. The business of seeing beyond his limitations can come later; he is no less excellent a guide for being an excellent guide to outgrow.

Let us hope that the first printing of *Titans of Literature* was a small one, so that the numerous errors may be corrected forthwith. The error most frequently noted by the reviewers was Mr. Rascoe's curious notion that "Francesca was condemned to Hell because of her incestuous love for her brother Paulo". As Mr. Arthur Colton remarks, "Infelicitous, but hardly incestuous". Mr. Colton's temperate and discerning notice in the *Saturday Review of Literature* was the best that we saw. In the passage given below he analyzes very neatly, if perhaps too mildly and tentatively, the current that governs Mr. Rascoe in his more aberrant moments:—

> Possibly we have reacted so strenuously against the "romance of virtue" that we have contracted a "romance of vice" and are more interested in finding something shocking than is quite normal. Possibly it is a phase of the "disillusionment" that we have our knives out for Vergil, Dante, and Milton, and our caresses all for Horace, Boccaccio, and Villon.

A Prize for Mr. Shaw

IN THESE days when a literary prize in the form of a cheque is appreciated somewhat more for the cash than for the credit, one turns with a certain nostalgia to the anecdote of George Bernard Shaw and the *Collier's Weekly* Prize recounted in Professor Archibald Henderson's latest Shaw compendium (*Bernard Shaw: Playboy and Prophet.* Appleton. $7.50). In 1908 *Collier's* published a Shaw story called *Aerial Football: The New Game*—a fantasy concerning the simultaneous arrival at the gates of Heaven of the Bishop of St. Pancras and a bibulous char-

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woman named Mrs. Alfred Harris. *Collier's* at that date followed a custom of awarding a thousand-dollar prize four times a year for the best story that had appeared in its columns during the preceding three months, and in due course Mr. Shaw's effort was selected. The prize money was forwarded to him, and his reply appears in Professor Henderson's book.

SIR:

What do you mean by this unspeakable outrage? You send me a cheque for a thousand dollars, and inform me that it is a bonus offered by Messrs. P. F. Collier and Son for the best story received during the quarter in which my contribution appeared. May I ask what Messrs. P. F. Collier and Son expected my story to be?

If it was not the best they could get for the price they were prepared to pay, they had no right to insert it at all. If it was the best, what right have they to stamp their own contributors publicly, as inferior when they have taken steps to secure the result beforehand by paying a special price to a special writer?

And what right have they to assume that I want to be paid twice over for my work, or that I am in the habit of accepting bonuses and competing for prizes?

Waiving all these questions for a moment, I have another one to put to you. How do Messrs. P. F. Collier and Son know that my story was the best they received during the quarter? Are they posterity? Are they the verdict of history? Have they even the very doubtful qualification of being professional critics?

I had better break this letter off lest I should be betrayed into expressing myself as strongly as I feel. I return the cheque. If you should see fit to use it for the purpose of erecting a tombstone to Messrs. P. F. Collier and Son, I shall be happy to contribute the epitaph, in which I shall do my best to do justice to their monstrous presumption.

G. BERNARD SHAW

Bernard Shaw: Playboy and Prophet is a useful and certainly a voluminous work. It runs to nearly 900 pages; it contains willy-nilly everything about Mr. Shaw that is of interest to Professor Henderson, and much of it is of interest to anyone. Professor Henderson, indeed, stands in much the same relation to Mr. Shaw as the late Frédéric Masson did to the first Napoleon: each has devoted a large part of a lifetime to building up a legend about an idol, and where M. Masson goes delving into the laundry lists of Lieutenant Bonaparte, Professor Henderson will devote a number of pages to Mr. Shaw's personal habits of dress. It is not for us to say which of the two, the Frenchman or the American, has chosen the worthier subject—and M. Masson died an Academician.

There are some, however, who even at the time when the letter quoted above was written were inclined to stress the *Playboy* rather than the *Prophet*, and would not be inclined to take too seriously Professor Henderson's claim that this is "a masterpiece of Shavian humour and irony". We hope we are not accomplishing a work of supererogation when we reprint today the comment on the *Collier's* incident which appeared in the columns of THE BOOKMAN at the time.

Mr. Bernard Shaw recently returned to *Collier's Weekly* a cheque for $1000, which he had as plainly earned as if it had been a payment of $5 for washing the windows of the building in which the magazine is published. As we understand the matter, he wrote a story for *Collier's* and received his price. . . . Now it goes without saying that any man, whether author or window-washer, may find it his duty to return to a publisher a portion of what he has received. Nor is there any question that the unexpected thousand will do more for mankind if left with *Collier's Weekly* than if transferred to Mr. Bernard Shaw. In the return of the money he was right. It is only his reasons that are ridiculous.

The only interest we have in this small affair is its bearing on the myth of a Bernard Shaw, thinker, philosopher, reformer, serious man, head

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of a cult, center of Shavian circles. We have always argued that there is no such person. Mr. Shaw has never been a thinker, but he has been a stimulator of thought, and the thought generally takes the opposite direction from that which he apparently intended. Mr. Shaw's plays and prefaces are, when considered by the reason, precisely on the level of this letter. He has never taken time to think. He is engaged in a more agreeable occupation. He is a delightful, unconscionable artist, and, like many other artists, turns the very incompleteness of his thinking to excellent account. We should all rather hear Mr. Shaw speak eloquently out of his ignorance than other men out of full heads; and our wish is often granted. All this is generally understood of Mr. Shaw, but unfortunately there are still some Shavians. To these we commend his letter to *Collier's*. . . . Any ordinary case will be cured by a single reading. An acute case may require that the patient should read it twice over and then ask himself reverently if the writer of such a letter ought on any occasion to be considered as merely rational, a socialist, Fabian, anti-idealist, or anything else more definite than one of those charming creatures, easily intoxicated with air, sound, colour, water, or vegetables, whom the world calls artists, and who in turn inebriate the world. . . . The serious Mr. Shaw is to be found only in the quality of his literary expression, its form, conceits, wit, humour, sudden illuminations. His mind has been busy with every part of his work except its "underlying philosophy".

The above was written in 1908, probably by the lamented Frank Moore Colby, then on THE BOOKMAN'S staff. Has any sounder judgement of Shaw appeared anywhere since that time, in nine hundred pages or in nine?

The American Notebooks Again

THE sixteenth work to be published on the Philip Hamilton McMillan Memorial Publication Fund by the Yale University Press is Nathaniel Hawthorne's *American Notebooks*, edited from the manuscripts in the Pierpont Morgan collection. Mr. Randall Stewart has done a thorough and scholarly piece of work, restoring the parts omitted by Mrs. Hawthorne in her *Passages from the American Notebooks* and annotating fully and unobtrusively in such a way as to make a volume of great value to the literary historian. Perhaps not all young writers of this generation know what an inexhaustible treasure-house of ideas, anecdotes, and stimulating comments they will find in these collected notes of Hawthorne's. They are more likely to turn to Chekhov's notebooks which of late have been more widely celebrated, due to the vogue of Katherine Mansfield's stories.

Undoubtedly this volume will replace, in most libraries, the earlier versions edited by Hawthorne's wife. But at the moment of approving and welcoming such a literary labour of love, it seems only fair to say openly that our literary researchers would be quite as effective and far more humanly winning if in pursuing their tasks they could resist the temptation to heap scorn on their predecessors. Mrs. Hawthorne, as anyone knows who has had the opportunity to read of the life of Hawthorne at all, was to a far greater extent than usual the helpmeet and literary adviser of her remarkable husband. That he depended on her taste, bowed to her judgement, and readily altered his work for what, to an outsider, might seem her prejudices, we have evidence enough and to spare. It is, then, a little late in the day to claim that the books as Mrs. Hawthorne presented them misrepresent Hawthorne's genius. Heaven knows our researchers are not noticeably lacking in imagination: their imagination frequently makes the most fantastic leaps to unwarranted conclusions; but of sympathetic imagination they frequently seem to have not a grain.

After the death of her husband, and with-

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out his guiding hand, it is quite possible, as Mr. Stewart charges, that Mrs. Hawthorne went farther than necessary in altering what she considered inaccuracies and awkwardnesses from the long detailed notes which Hawthorne had kept all his life, in this country and abroad; and it is even obvious that occasionally she deleted what was not so much incorrect as idiosyncratic. But surely it is going too far to represent her as a dismal prig. The text of the book's jacket illustrates the total effect of Mr. Stewart's comments when it speaks—doubtless in order to capitalize on the vogue set by Van Wyck Brooks's study of Mark Twain—of Mrs. Hawthorne's "extensive and prudish revisions".

A little comprehension of Mrs. Hawthorne's position at the time when the notebooks were first made public property might call forth more human charity than she has been accorded here or in previous books about the greatest of American writers. Her children were still young, and had their lives to lead, great man or no great man. She herself knew how completely Hawthorne had relied on her taste and judgement. He was not, at that time, removed from the company of his fellows by the perspectives of time and admitted genius. She gave, honestly and generously, what she believed best represented Hawthorne as he would care to be represented. If her judgement was fallible it is possible that subsequent judgements are no less so. We can be, and are, deeply grateful to those who return to the heritage of manuscripts left to us by genius after the immediate human situation has been altered by the passage of years; of such records, as complete and outspoken as possible, we can hardly have enough. But we have had considerably too much, particularly in recent years, of insinuations, outright charges, or shrieking challenges that the wives, friends, and children of great men engage in mean-spirited and prudish conspiracies for the sole purpose of presenting them in the light of genteel drawing-room heroes.

Kenneth Grahame

MR. CLAYTON HAMILTON'S tribute to the late Kenneth Grahame, printed elsewhere in this issue, appears just as Mr. Grahame's countrymen have collected in one volume three of his best loved stories. The volume is called *The Kenneth Grahame Book* (Methuen), and contains *The Golden Age, Dream Days,* and *The Wind in the Willows*. It will undoubtedly appear in this country before many months have passed. Also, Putnam's are publishing here next month, in modernized form, an anthology of children's poetry which Grahame edited seventeen years ago—*The Cambridge Book of Children's Verse*.

The Bookman's Literary Portraits

MANY of the early letters commenting on the CHRISTMAS BOOKMAN contain requests for individual copies of the photographs of writers which appeared in our Christmas Portfolio of Literary Portraits. In reproducing in this issue by a new aquatone process a portfolio of four of Georges Schreiber's drawings of authors, we have therefore arranged to have on hand a sufficient supply of single copies of each portrait to meet such requests. Details of how they may be procured will be found in an announcement in our advertising columns. Mr. Schreiber, who will have four more drawings in the February number of THE BOOKMAN, is a young German artist who now makes his home in New York. Several of the portraits

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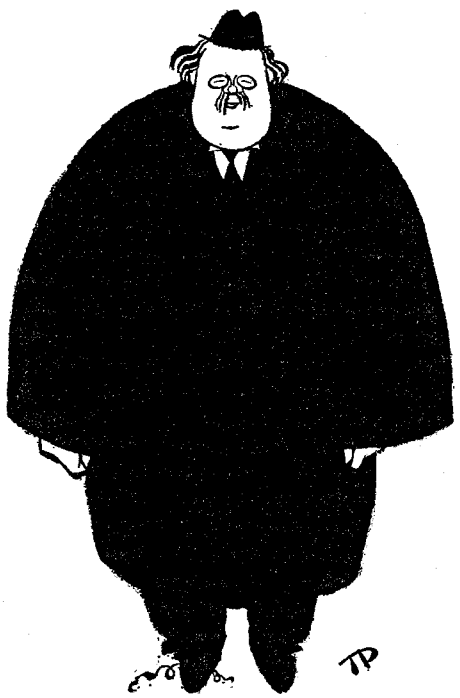
which we reproduce were done during a special trip abroad which he made last summer; all are done from life and are signed by the sitter.

Mr. Chesterton Slips

We yield to no one in admiration for G. K. Chesterton. As his three, four, and sometimes five weekly articles stream from the presses, not to speak of the steady succession of solid books like his *Chaucer*, we are wont to exclaim that never before could there have been such an inexhaustible fountain of insight clothed in magnificent language. But we feel constrained to point out some strange lapses in a recent article of Chesterton's commenting on Dorothea Brande's review of Edith Wharton's *The Gods Arrive* in the October Bookman. One would have thought that Chesterton, always the battler for neglected truths and the assailant of cant and confusion, could find plenty of enemies in the spacious modern world without being tempted to twist harmless words into the semblance of hostility to a worthy cause. But worse than that, he was led by his initial error to betray the cause itself by a defence nothing less than absurd.



Thomas Derrick in "The Listener"

Our fiction-reviewer had complained that the excellent merits of Mrs. Wharton's new novel were clouded by certain defects, particularly by the outlandishly unreal language the characters were frequently made to utter. She gave several examples, including a remark by the hero about the Duke of Spartivento: "'I wonder what's become of Alder's duke—you remember, the one with the name like the clanging of shields.'" Her comment was: "I say flatly that such a phrase as 'the name like the clanging of shields' never issued from a human throat in a sober moment". By "sober moment" she obviously meant an ordinary, conversational moment such as Mrs. Wharton was as obviously seeking to represent. But Mr. Chesterton, by some weird aberration, got the notion that imaginative language in general was being assaulted and forthwith sprang to its defence in a remarkable series of arguments.

He proceeds, for instance, as though our reviewer had asserted that *no one ever used such language*, and in all seriousness retorts: "But it is obvious that such names and noises must, in fact, have issued from thousands of human throats; or there would be no such titles as Spartivento, nor the great resounding Roman tongues that have given them birth". He then drives his pointless point home by allusions to other resounding place-names of the Latin peoples and to the language of Plato and of the Bible. Was there ever a sillier example of the old but unhonoured debating trick of sending a barrage of the obvi-

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ous to support a gas-attack of culpable distortion?

So much for Mr. Chesterton's criticism of THE BOOKMAN's reviewer. But worse is to come. One finally realizes with something like horror that he is not simply belabouring the patent fact that language is sometimes resounding and imaginative, but that he is actually contending that the great poets and those nameless local poets who create the noble place-names achieved their finest effects in the ordinary course of conversation! "Conversation was not always so flat; even if it is really so flat now," he exclaims in pointing out that in the Bible "men naturally lift up their voices to lament or denounce in the tones of the lyre and the trumpet", and that with Plato "a mere turn of phrase will take him into the seventh heaven among the singing stars". He adds: "In short, if the criticism is true touching modern speech, it is a condemnation of modern speech and not of Mrs. Wharton's writing". Now really! It is going to take considerable urging—which Mr. Chesterton will never furnish, because he doesn't believe it for a minute—to convince very many people that the mood of poetic creation and the mood of conversational intercourse have ever been practically identical; or that Plato or a Hebrew prophet or an Italian peasant or a French nobleman would turn to his companion to inquire after a friend in the language that a fictionizing school-girl would ascribe to her novelist-hero.

If one searches one can find a valid and admirable thesis in Mr. Chesterton's article: a defense of imaginative, full-bodied language against the Anglo-Saxon tendency to clip and flatten speech into a colourless blur. In the midst of what we can only call Mr. Chesterton's nonsense he suddenly emerges into a sample of the excellent sense wedded to excellent expression which his admirers have had much more reason to associate with his name:—

> Names like Colonna or Corleone are not pseudonyms; they are not sham and shabby aliases. They are just as real, and therefore just as realistic, as Higgs or Miggs—or Jinks. And one must be rather narrowly Nordic not to regret that some sublime peak or some strange new sea be called Buggins' Bay, when, if they had been the paltriest hamlets in Italy, their very names might have rolled like the thunder in the Apennines. I say nothing against the heroic Perkins and the unconquered Buggins; I only say their names lack something of the mountain and mountain wave.

But even this is somewhat spoiled for us by the sentence which follows, in which Mr. Chesterton allows himself to take a verbal debating point of a kind that seems decidedly alien to his usual tone: "In fact, the modern critic is right when he says, unconsciously, of his own type of criticism, that he says it flatly. It is as possible to speak flat as it is to sing flat". That comes perilously close to being a sneer; and a sneer is unexpected from Mr. Chesterton.

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PUBLISHER'S READER

by Louis Kronenberger

I was for a number of years a publisher's reader. I was offered as small a book as a four-line poem and as long a one as a two-thousand-page novel. I never rejected a genius or a best-seller and I never discovered one. But there was a little amusement as well as a lot of ennui to reading thousands of manuscripts; and it was occasionally fun, though generally boring, to meet their authors. Few intelligent people believe any longer that publishing houses have no heart, that they only slam doors and mail rejection slips; few intelligent people believe the myth of the misunderstood, underrated author who never gets a break. It is the contrary, of course, which is true. The average author gets much more attention than he deserves, and the average manuscript, which should be abandoned on page one, is seldom abandoned before page thirty. The trouble, of course, is that everybody in America is sure he can write; and on the advice of his high-school principal, his grammar-school principal, or his kindergarten teacher, sends out what he has written in search of a publisher. A fine anthology could be made of paragraphs from unpublished manuscripts. It would be the funniest book in the world.

There seems to be no etiquette as to what constitutes the well-dressed manuscript. Scripts come into publishing houses in every form you might expect and a few you wouldn't. They come rolled, they come loose, they come bound; in stationery-boxes, cake-boxes, shoe-boxes, metal containers; in brief-cases and portfolios; even in suit-cases, and I have heard of one which arrived in a trunk. Some are in pencil, some in ink; some single-spaced on the typewriter, some double-spaced, some triple-spaced; a few privately printed in poor type on bad paper. Some come in on white paper, others on yellow or brown or green; still others on "flimsy". Some are illustrated by the author or his friends. Many are bound in vellum or parchment or leather with the titles in fancy script. An unbelievable number are decorated with ribbons and tassels. It is not unusual for the author to send his photograph along; and once or twice, with the author's friends and family to impersonate his characters, stories have been illustrated throughout with snapshots.

But the outsides of most manuscripts are quite tame compared to the contents. All you know, all you hold sacred, all you hold self-evident is likely to be swept away in a minute by these ladies and gentlemen who defy grammar, who defy science, who defy human experience. One encounters odes that outdistance anything F.P.A. has ever run down; aphorisms that beat Calvin Coolidge's; stories that can't even be ascribed to madhouses or nurseries. It is not simply a matter of grammar or rhyme or anachronism, although grammar and rhyme are violated and anachronism crowned; it is more, as we say in the higher criticism, a case of the whole texture. After all, this Mrs. Winters who submits her odes can bake an excellent chocolate

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cake, and this Mr. Wilson who submits his novel can add up accounts in a jiffy. But Mrs. Winters exclaims:

> Lost! Lost! Lost! Lost!
> My girlhood and my youth;

and Mr. Wilson shoots his hero through a cannon to Mars where he meets Dyllva the Green-Woman and begets children of a light pistachio colour.

The two themes, incidentally, which most delight amateur novelists are Mars and Utopia. About 25 percent of all the fiction written—though less than .00025 percent of all that is published—is laid outside time and space as we reckon them. Every day a novel arrives which opens: "It was the year 2367 in the communist state of Ansonia" or "He blinked his eyes—so this was Mars!" And a page of description almost immediately follows which features strange coloured birds, stranger coloured rocks, girls with hair falling to their knees, and a weatherbeaten old stone god.

But the locale needn't be exotic or otherworldly to give you pleasure. I remember one *scène-à-faire* set no farther away than the Palisades, a shattering climax in which the hero hurled the villain over the cliffs in a sentence containing eleven metaphors, nine of them mixed. There are also some useful caves and glades down Long Island way: I recall a scene of innocent love in a glade, and of high passion in a cave which, once again to use the language of the higher criticism, were memorable.

The poetry submitted varies. Mere doggerel—and much of it is doggerel—proves dull; but there are many poets of the Shelley-Swinburne-Francis Thompson school who rise without trouble into the high ether hanging on to exclamation points. The epic is still much cultivated, chiefly in rural districts; and *vers libre* has found favour as far afield as the Ozarks. But of course it is love poetry which predominates; poetry that whispers, that coos, that gropes and groans and shrieks in agony; poetry—and you must take this literally—that brings tears to the eyes.

The level of writing at which literacy may be said to appear generally produces novels of this sort:

> CHAPTER ONE
>
> The mountains caught the spangled red and purple beams of the setting sun, and high in the sky a solitary bird winged it toward his distant nest. In the fading light one could just descry the white figure of a girl tripping down the valley path toward the cottage at the foot of the hills whose chimney gave off wreaths of friendly, curling smoke.

Already the end is in sight at the top of page 309:

> The girl smiled shyly into Hugh's boyish eyes and put her tiny hand inside his larger one.
>
> "Now that I've found you again," said Hugh, "I will never let you go. Never!"
>
> He released her hand and caught her in his arms. As their lips met, a warm tear trickled down her soft flushed cheek.
>
> "I love you," said Luette.
>
> The mountains caught the spangled red and purple beams of the setting sun, and high in the sky a solitary bird winged it toward his distant nest.

Yet, on the whole, I prefer the authors to their manuscripts. Unlike their work, they are always unpredictable. It is not merely that so often a withered old maid writes a tale of passionate free love, a Milquetoast of a book-keeper a novel of derring-do, or a husky rum-runner a tender story about a horse. You can spot such wish-fulfillments in the manuscripts themselves, no matter how awful they are. But most amateur writers, however lacking in literary personality they may be, have authentic personali-

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ties in the flesh. The worse they write, it can almost be said, the nicer they are. Your genius has to be handled with kid gloves and your competent professional writer is very likely truculent or unreasonable or unsociable or insanely vain. But he who visits Mars and she who gets winded riding Pegasus is generally humble, kindly, grateful, and desperately eager to please. He proffers his manuscript, wrapped in newspaper, with the eyes of a dog. "There are stamps inside," he says, "but I hope you won't have to use them." "How long", she asks weakly, "do you suppose I'll have to wait before I hear?" Or: "May I show you a letter which Mr. Roberts, the minister in my home town, has written about my poems?" Many of these authors would like to offer you cigars or an apple. Some do offer to pay for your "criticism". They always, by the way, want "criticism", these hoboes, bell-hops, stenographers, cigar-store clerks. I risk being accused of sentimentality by saying that probably the nicest authors who come in are the ex-convicts, most of them bringing horribly inept sketches of prison life.

The one terrible thing about these people is the time they take up. They sit down, they remove their overcoats, they light cigarettes; and if fingers can be said to drawl, theirs do while unknotting the string and unfolding the paper. Then follows, unless you act quickly, a detailed synopsis of *Linnets of Early Spring*; and then—for a mere synopsis is by no means all—the five other possible endings. Form letters from other publishers are often hauled out; high school report-cards, Junior's picture, newspaper clippings, even birth certificates, naturalization papers, and marriage licenses. Four people, two of each sex, have offered to read their work aloud, either then and there or by appointment in the evening. A few authors deliver ultimatums: an answer within twenty-four or forty-eight hours, or your bitterest publishing rival is going to make a fortune instead of you. It takes a certain will power to give your rival the chance.

The cranks remain most vividly in the memory. There was the woman who had been cured of blindness by staring into the sun; her manuscript described the process. One man was the reincarnation of (of all people) George III; another man was receiving fortnightly bulletins from Abraham Lincoln. An old woman who wrote poetry feared she would die before getting word of our decision, and if she did I was under no circumstances to hand over her manuscript to her step-brother. One quiet-spoken gentleman, just as he was closing the door behind me, announced, "You know, of course, that Mark Twain was Lewis Carroll"; his book proved it. One old fellow had spent thirty years composing some nine thousand palindromes, the best of them being something like "drab bard". And of course every manuscript is going to be a best-seller—the author himself already has orders for sixteen copies among his friends.

Occasionally an encounter with an author is far from humorous. It is surprising how many people come to see you who are mentally unbalanced, who have been at one time or another in asylums. A dope addict threatened to become violent one day and sent me scooting into an adjacent office. A young girl threatened to commit suicide if we did not accept her manuscript. But the saddest case I remember is that of a former school-teacher who, imagining herself persecuted by the Board of Education, her principal, and her fellow-teachers, had been put in an asylum where she soon after imagined herself persecuted by the keepers, the matrons, and her fellow-patients. She had somehow been re-

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leased and brought her "story" to me—three hatboxes full of pencilled diary notations. She hadn't a cent in the world and wanted an advance against her story. When I told her that business conditions made this absolutely impossible, she proceeded to break down hysterically and sob in my office for half an hour.

The position of the publisher's reader himself deserves, I think, some honour. He acts cruelly but without self-interest. He is relatively patient and sympathetic. More than that, he calmly rejects offers that might mean security against old age, and calmly ignores threats that might mean anything. For years I was given threats and also offered bribes. The threats came to nothing, but perhaps the bribes would have made my fortune. I was invited to meals, asked to collaborate, tacitly offered the reward of slim white bodies. I could have had my palm read and my horoscope revealed. I could have been given tips on the market and tips on the races. I could have learned how to smoke an opium pipe, drive a plane, dance the rumba, and speak Hindustani; I could have bought my clothes at a discount; I could have got them for nothing. No Persian shah has more power or receives greater homage than a reader does before the author hears the bad news. And until he does, every author is a Faust willing to barter his soul for a contract. To date, unfortunately, no reader has had the sense to play Mephistopheles. But an enterprising reader who is not too high-minded or squeamish will arrive some day, take in the situation at a glance, and turn it overnight into a remunerative and honourable racket. Two years later he will buy out his boss.

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FRATER AVE ATQUE VALE

A PERSONAL APPRECIATION OF THE LATE KENNETH GRAHAME

by Clayton Hamilton

No other place on earth could be further in feeling from the English countryside than the Grand Cañon of the Colorado, in the state of Arizona.

Several years ago, I visited the Grand Cañon of the Colorado. Having seen it, I am relieved of any desire to see it again. It is the most gigantic chasm in the surface of the earth and is, of course, impressive because of its immensity. Its ever-changing multi-coloured iridescence is fantastically beautiful. But it is a lonely place, devoid of any human interest. Nobody, in historic or in prehistoric times, has ever lived in the Grand Cañon. Though many of its pinnacles and buttes take on at times the look of towered castles, they have been sculptured only by uncounted centuries of wind and show no touch of mortal hands. That dizzying immensity is empty of all human memories and offers nothing to stimulate the sense of drama or romance.

Yet my visit to the Grand Cañon was not wasted; for, in the midst of that stupendous loneliness, I met a human being.

Perched upon the edge of the great chasm, at the outset of Bright Angel Trail, I found a little bookshop. Its stock in trade consisted mainly of picture-books descanting on the beauties of Arizona and New Mexico and the sort of fiction which celebrates the great open spaces where men are men. Yet, in the very middle of the center table, isolated in that place of honour, I was startled to discover a copy of *The Wind in the Willows*. Impulsively I picked it up; and, with a suddenness that might possibly have been interpreted as rude, I said to the proprietor, "What, in the name of heaven, is this doing here?"

She was a quiet woman, with grey hair. Her answer, as I learned a little later, was completely logical, though, at the moment, it scarcely seemed to fit the question. "I am very pleased to meet you," she remarked.

She then went on to tell me that in 1908, when *The Wind in the Willows* had just been given to the world, she had been a saleswoman in Chicago, at McClurg's, and that then and there she had registered a vow that if ever she should have a bookshop of her own there must always be a copy of that classic in the place of honour. "It helps me to retain my self-respect", she added, "while I am selling to the daily tourists at El Tovar the sort of fiction that they read in Pullman cars.

"I have another motive also, which you, of course, will understand. It is rather lonely here in Arizona. Most of the people who drift into my shop are merely tourists—you know the type. But I can always tell a real person by the look that comes into his eyes when he sees *The Wind in the Willows* in the center of my table. I do not need to ask his name or anything about him; but I know at once that he is one of the elect, who love the loveliness of words. You, for instance,

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are the first real person who has come here in three months and seventeen days. That is why I said at once that I was pleased to meet you."

This encounter in itself was surprisingly exciting; but it took on an added tensity when I told her, "I know Kenneth Grahame personally. Some years ago, I spent a week-end at his farm in Berkshire. We still exchange letters now and then. I shall write to him about you".

She looked upon me with an expression that was almost tremulous. "Then, you have actually shaken hands with Kenneth Grahame?"

"Not once, but many times."

She wavered toward me with a thrilling hesitance, like one envisaging a vast adventure. "Would you mind", she asked, and then the strengthened impulse swept her forward, "Would you mind if I grasped you by the hand?"

This was on the edge of the Grand Cañon of the Colorado, at the outset of Bright Angel Trail. No other place on earth could be further in feeling from the English countryside.

II

In the spring of 1910, I moved to London, in order to prepare my little volume, *On the Trail of Stevenson,* under the admonitory eyes of Sidney Colvin, Edmund Gosse, and Andrew Lang. I had hoped that one of Stevenson's friends would be able to introduce me to Kenneth Grahame; and I was both disappointed and surprised when each of them told me in turn that they had not seen him in a dozen years. It appeared that upon resigning his secretarial position at the Bank of England he had retired to a farm in Berkshire; he rarely came to town, he never went anywhere or saw anybody—he had adopted, in effect, the life of a recluse. Each of them—particularly Andrew Lang—spoke very highly of Kenneth Grahame, not only as an artist but also as a person, and gave voice to an expression of regret that they never saw him any more. Thereupon I wrote to Kenneth Grahame and sent him a copy of a review of *The Wind in the Willows* which I had written when the book was first published in this country. By return mail I received a cordial invitation to come down to Berkshire for a week-end, penned with that meticulous chirography which looked as if it had been graven on a copper plate.

He lived in a farm-house known ancestrally as Boham's, in the hamlet of Blewbury, adjacent to the railway station of Didcot, in Berkshire. As I jogged down in the dilatory train, his elaborate address attuned itself to the rhythm of the wheels and moved me to the composition of a series of preposterous couplets, such as:—

> Boham's, Blewbury, Didcot, Berks,
> Fell in the sea and was bitten by sharks.

One is not at one's keenest on a railway journey.

At Didcot, on the railway platform, Kenneth Grahame stood awaiting me. He was very tall and very broad—a massive figure, but with no spare flesh. At that time he was fifty years of age. His hair was white, but his face was almost beatifically young, and he had the clear and roseate complexion of a healthy child. He was dressed in knickerbockers, a soft shirt, and a baggy coat of tweeds. One could see at a glance that he was one of the rare people in the world who look like themselves. I felt a desperate necessity to say something unimportant; and I told him how the rhythm of the railway wheels had churned his long address within

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my mind to jiggery. I reminded him that an American poetess, that season, had just won a prize at Stratford-on-Avon for her play, *The Piper,* and suggested that

Boham's, Blewbury, Didcot, Berks,

might serve as an appropriate address for

Josephine Preston Peabody Marks.

"Yes, indeed," he countered; "and

At Boham's, Blewbury, Didcot, Berks,
She would wake in the morning and listen to larks."

That was our introduction to each other.

III

Boham's was a brick farm-house, with a heavily thatched roof; it dated from early Tudor times. The latest proprietor had deftly managed to introduce such modern excrescences as a bath-tub and electric lights without disturbing the historic atmosphere of the ancient edifice. He said to me a little later, "In England, we may choose from any of a dozen different centuries to live in; and who would select the twentieth century when he might live more simply in the spacious times of great Elizabeth?"

Certainly life seemed spacious as we sat in the little court-yard, surrounded by the rural erections of that ancient Saxon whose name had happened to be Boham. By comparison, it seemed a little cramped when we went indoors for meals. The household consisted only of Mrs. Grahame (Elspeth) and a lovely little boy whose face was like a Maxfield Parrish illustration. I believe that the actual name of the little boy was Alastair; but, in the household, he was known familiarly as Mouse. Even with the addition of myself, the company did not constitute a crowd; and yet, before the second day was finished, I became aware of a delicate and somewhat strange phenomenon. It was simply, but emphatically, this—that Kenneth Grahame was not at home beneath a roof. Indoors, he would lapse into a silence that might endure an hour, for—as I observed with gratitude—he felt no social compulsion whatsoever to keep talking in the presence of a visitor; but, as soon as we started out upon a ramble across country, he would break into an easy current of cheery conversation.

I had known, of course, for years, that all of Kenneth Grahame's work had been posited upon the opening stanza of that great Ode of Wordsworth which is one of the saddest, as it is one of the wisest, utterances of mankind. It was, therefore, not merely for information that I asked him why he had written mainly—almost only—about children and about animals. I cannot, of course, report his words with absolute fidelity; but I can recover at least the gist of his reply.

"The most priceless possession of the human race is the wonder of the world. Yet, latterly, the utmost endeavours of mankind have been directed toward the dissipation of that wonder. Everybody seems to cry out for a world in which there shan't be any Santa Claus. Science analyzes everything to its component parts, and neglects to put them together again. A barefoot boy cannot go wading in a mountain stream without being told that he must no longer spell the fluid that sings trickling round his feet by the age-old school-house lettering of W-A-T-E-R, but must substitute, for the sake of scientific exactitude, the symbol H_2O. Nobody, any longer, may hope to entertain an angel unawares, or to meet Sir Launcelot in shining armour on a moonlit road. But what is the use of living in a world devoid of wonderment? You have quoted Wordsworth:—'It is not now as it has been before'. But the

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poet *began* by reminding us that, 'There *was* a time'. . . . It is *that* time which I have attempted to recapture and commemorate in *Dream Days* and *The Golden Age*.

"Granted that the average man may live for seventy years, it is a fallacy to assume that his life from sixty to seventy is more important than his life from five to fifteen. Children are not merely people: they are the only really living people that have been left to us in an over-weary world. Any normal child will instinctively agree with your own American poet, Walt Whitman, when he said: 'To me every hour of the day and night is an unspeakably perfect miracle'.

"In my tales about children, I have tried to show that their simple acceptance of the mood of wonderment, their readiness to welcome a perfect miracle at any hour of the day or night, is a thing more precious than any of the laboured acquisitions of adult mankind. . . .

"As for animals, I wrote about the most familiar and domestic in *The Wind in the Willows* because I felt a duty to them as a friend. Every animal, by instinct, lives according to his nature. Thereby he lives wisely, and betters the tradition of mankind. No animal is ever tempted to belie his nature. No animal, in other words, knows how to tell a lie. Every animal is honest. Every animal is straightforward. Every animal is true—and is, therefore, according to his nature, both beautiful and good. I like most of my friends among the animals more than I like most of my friends among mankind. Do you wonder at that? . . . Come, and let me show you."

Thereupon he led me on a ramble to all the other farms in Blewbury and introduced me individually to each of the domestic animals of that rural district. During the course of these social calls upon innumerable horses, dogs, cats, pigs, cows, rabbits, hens, and sheep, I was reminded of the lament of Andrew Lang that he never saw Kenneth Grahame any more.

This particular adventure culminated in Grahame's declaration that his favourite among all animals was the domestic pig. With an almost childish sense of triumph, he took me, as a climax, to a formal meeting with his favourite sow; and, as we leaned upon the ancient railings of the pen, he discounted upon the virtues of the grunting individual before us in language as eloquent as that which he had used erstwhile in writing to celebrate the beauties, in *The Magic Ring*, of Coralie and Zephyrine.

When we came back to the thatched-roofed farm-house—known ancestrally as Boham's—I noticed that three or four of Maxfield Parrish's coloured illustrations for *The Golden Age* were hanging on the walls of the living-room. I said something about the illustrator. Thereupon I learned that Kenneth Grahame had never laid eyes on Maxfield Parrish. When he found that I had met the artist, he asked me eagerly, "Tell me—but I am almost afraid to ask—does he look—does he look like the sort of man who ought to paint such pictures?"

"Maxfield Parrish", I replied, "is one of the handsomest men in the United States. He has a beautiful face, especially in profile. He looks exactly as any lover of his work would wish."

"I am glad, I am very glad to hear you tell me that," said Kenneth Grahame. "People really ought to look like themselves. Keats did, and so did Shelley. But so few of them do, so few of them do."

And out of a slight corner of an eye, I looked upon a face that was beatifically young beneath its coronal of silver hair, a great head poised upon a frame that might

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be called heroic; and I listened to the cadence of a voice that contained the music of larks in the morning air.

"You have spoken truthfully," I said.

IV

The Berkshire landscape, although generally level, was diversified here and there by hummocks which had been heaped up by the Danes—heaven knows how many centuries ago—and were known in that locality as barrows. One day we were sitting on the summit of a Danish barrow, to take the wind and talk without disturbance of a roof.

"I have come here to pick a quarrel with you," I began. "*The Golden Age,* if I remember rightly, was published in 1896, and *Dream Days* in 1898. At any rate, I recall that I flunked a college examination in 1899 when I was asked to write a a dissertation (in general) about English Prose and insisted upon writing, instead, a dissertation (in particular) on Kenneth Grahame. Then ten years elapsed—*ten years*—before the publication of *The Wind in the Willows.* That ten years was too long. We were told, of course, that you were busy at the Bank of England: but that excuse no longer holds. My quarrel with you is precisely this: I cannot wait another decade for another book from you. Don't keep me waiting. I mean this very simply, however silly it may sound. I happen to be gifted—or cursed—with an obsolescent sense that formerly was called an ear. English prose is English prose, and has been, ever since Sir Thomas Browne. But R. L. S. is dead. You, and only you, remain alive—to make majestic music to the ear in a period that has become eye-minded and tone-deaf. I do not really wish to quarrel with you. I ask only that you shall give me, very quickly, something more to read; and, when I say *that,* I mean, of course, to read *aloud.*"

Upon the windy summit of the Danish barrow, an appreciable silence passed before the large man with the boyish face said anything at all. At last he spoke, seriously and almost carefully; again I give his meaning but not his exact words.

"What you have said has touched me very deeply, because I know it is sincere. And yet, I doubt very much if I shall ever write another book. . . . A certain amount of what a countryman of yours called *life* must go into the making of any page of prose. The effort is enormous."

"But everybody praises you", I interjected, "for your graceful ease."

"A sentence that is easy to read may have been difficult to put together. Perhaps the greater the easiness in reading, the harder that task in composition. Writing is not easy: I need not tell you that. There is always a pleasure in the exercise; but, also, there is always an agony in the endeavour. If we make a formula of those two motives, I think we may define the process. It is, at its best, a pleasurable agony.

"I am not a professional writer. I never have been, and I never will be, by reason of the accident that I don't need any money. I do not care for notoriety: in fact, it is distasteful to me. If I should ever become a popular author, my privacy would be disrupted and I should no longer be allowed to live alone.

"What, then, is the use of writing, for a person like myself? The answer might seem cryptic to most. It is merely that a fellow entertains a sort of hope that, somehow, sometime, he may build a noble sentence that might make Sir Thomas Browne sit upward once again in that inhospitable grave of his in Norwich.

"But language—before this ancient world grew up and went astray—was intended to

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be spoken to the ear. We are living now in an eye-minded age, when he who runs may read and the average person glimpses his daily reading on the run. What is the use, any longer, of toying with the pleasurable agony of attempting stately sentences of English prose? Apart from you and myself, who sit alone upon this ancient barrow, there are not more than six men in the United Kingdom who have inherited an ear for prose. I would set Austin Dobson at the top of the list; he is endowed with a delicate and dainty sense of rhythm. Rudyard Kipling knows his King James Bible, and that means very much—now that John Ruskin has passed away. But, tell me, in *your* country, is there anyone at all who still entertains an ear for English prose?"

I mentioned one. His name—till then unknown—was Brian Hooker.

"And all that agony, for half a dozen readers."

"The lovers of *The Wind in the Willows* have been counted by the thousands," I objected. "All of them are eagerly awaiting another book by the same author."

"They liked the subject-matter," he replied. "They did not even notice the source of all the agony, and all the joy. A large amount of what Thoreau called life went into the making of many of those playful pages. To toil at making sentences means to sit indoors for many hours, cramped above a desk. Yet, out of doors, the wind may be singing through the willows, and my favourite sow may be preparing to deliver a large litter in the fullness of the moon."

V

The month of July, in 1932, was a time of grievous trouble in the world. The Prime Minister of Great Britain was presiding over a conference at Lausanne which had to do with international finance. Other leaders of the English-speaking world were busy at Geneva in a conference which had to do with armaments. The United States was noisy with politics and all of the absurd tumult incidental to the initiation of a Presidential campaign. The newspapers were crowded with accounts of meaningless excursions and alarums.

Under these circumstances, little attention was attracted by a simple item of news which was telegraphed to the Associated Press on the date of the sixth of July. It read:

> Kenneth Grahame died today, at Pangbourne, on the Thames, at the age of seventy-two.

I doubt if anybody took the trouble to deliver this dispatch to Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, Prime Minister of Great Britain. I am certain that no one hauled the British ensign to half-mast, in Westminster or Geneva or Lausanne. And yet it is a truth that, on that day, the translators of the King James version of the Bible, seated at an eternal council-table, admitted to their fellowship the last great master of English prose, and that Great Britain lost the loveliest of all her living souls.

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A SELECTED SHELF

THE VICTORIAN SUNSET *by Esmé Wingfield-Stratford* (MORROW. $3.50)

MR. Wingfield-Stratford slays no giants in this book and discovers no heroes: his aim is to present, with all the graces of modern social history, an impartial survey of England during the last three decades of the nineteenth century. But beneath the lightness of his presentation, the reader can scarcely fail to discern a tragic and sombre text.

That heavy Victorian summer, which had arisen in the forties, was now beginning to fade: Mr. Wingfield-Stratford does not consider these seventies Victorian in the true sense—already the first signs of autumn were in their skies, already the promise of a long winter. But the public in general was convinced that this summer would never die. Everything was on the increase—wealth, children, cities, ships, inventions, and the guidance of everything could be left to Science, the new God, the God who took no account at all of the human good.

The Church, preoccupied with a sort of trench-warfare between High and Low, scarcely noticed that her Bible was being openly questioned in good society, or cared that her people were content to let a new inhuman God do all the thinking and all the dreaming for them. Here lay the real tragedy. Upon a fearful illusion of Progress—an illusion that things could go on multiplying themselves forever—these Victorians founded their conviction of security: and to a world whose face was rich and startling they made no spiritual adjustment whatsoever.

But though they felt that nothing could harm this security, its realities were not enlivening; and some escape had to be contrived from the monotony of daily life. So the great middle class, hitherto satisfied with itself, began to ape its betters; and Matthew Arnold's Mr. Bottles, that stolid Philistine, visibly shrank into Charles Dickens's Mr. Veneering, about whom everything was new—house, wife, baby, friends, clothes, gentility.

Nor was this all. Like an omen too vast for interpretation, the Queen emerged from her underworld at Balmoral—a fully-fledged goddess, with the Crown of India upon her head: and all sorts and conditions of Englishmen, under Disraeli's guidance, began to spin dreams of empire—dreams which, so history could have told them, were laden with disaster. England the self-satisfied had become England the self-conscious.

In the eighties, Mr. Wingfield-Stratford points us to a more profound social change. With the rise of a literate proletariat (heralded by the new popular press under Newnes and Harmsworth) Society was prepared to make some protective advances to the middle class: and the old Philistine died once and for all. Just as Mr. Bottles had shrunk to Mr. Veneering, so Mr. Veneering swelled again into *Punch's* Mrs. Ponsonby de Tomkyns, who desired nothing less than the society of duchesses, and might have it after a fashion so long as she could pay. Suburbia, which could not pay, set up its own imitation of Belgravia; and middle-class men and women, discontented with their secure life, took refuge in little games of lords and ladies.

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Nothing disturbed this security—not rumours of trouble in Egypt and the Sudan, nor rumours of war in Afghanistan and Transvaal; not the rise of Bismarck; not even the "ulcer" of Ireland, growing yearly more malignant. The decade went out in "ripples of Gilbertian laughter". Alone in a time of real creative vigour, Thomas Hardy looked out into a stark and cheerless future.

Of the great Victorians only Gladstone and Tennyson survived into the nineties: Browning was dead, and Rossetti, and Carlyle, and Arnold, and Darwin, and Disraeli. These nineties came in with an unfamiliar exuberance: everybody was noisily satisfied with things as they were, everybody was strenuously "up-to-date". Naughtiness, a legacy from the eighties, died out with Oscar Wilde's trial in '95, and the *Yellow Book* became respectable and died: the labour movement, another legacy, was comfortably Fabian: even the Irish question seemed to have been settled with the defeat of Gladstone's Home Rule Bill in '93 and the subsequent collapse of liberalism. Unionism had come in, apparently to stay, with its talk of a United Kingdom and an expanding Empire.

But the worst had happened. The new Empire of Joe Chamberlain and Cecil Rhodes had nothing of Gladstone's idealism in it: it was a pan-Britannic Empire, an Empire of Blood and Law. People did not care if Kipling sang of Nineveh and Tyre, since he praised "our far-flung battle-line" in almost the same breath: and the "reeking tube" was still a romantic thing so long as it reeked in far places and to the glory of Thomas Atkins.

The whole of Europe was poisoned with nationalism. Bismarck had been dismissed, and his armed peace was a thing of the past. The Kaiser no longer raced his yacht at Cowes. With a hundred petty gestures Europe was setting the stage for 1914.

And while England's music halls and drawing rooms resounded with a lunatic "Ta ra ra boom de ay", there came the cold reality of the Boer War: and Englishmen, suddenly deflated, but only half-conscious of an ancient warning, let the Victorian sun go down upon their wrath.

Here is the picture: a picture in which literature, the arts, politics, and diplomacy are subdued to the portrayal of a doomed social order. Criticism of such a picture would be ungrateful and impertinent. A whole knowledge only comes with detachment, and we are not yet detached from the Victorians; we are still suffering from the ills which they bequeathed us. For the present, at any rate, Mr. Wingfield-Stratford's book—and a very good book it is—may well have said the last word upon them.

GEORGE DANGERFIELD

ETRUSCAN PLACES *by D. H. Lawrence* (VIKING. $3.75)

BEWARE your Englishman of a fixed idea! If he is one of the writing, arty, and travelling variety, he will amuse, irritate, and attempt to corrupt your right reason. Norman Douglas, the Sitwell *frères*, and D. H. Lawrence follow in the footsteps perhaps marked out by George Borrow. They like to show you their sophistication or their emancipation, their little nauseas repeated throughout the book *ad nauseam*, and their great timeless minds. They delve into queer mysteries and queer places. They erect upon their recondite studies a pseudo-scholarly dissertation. Gospelling their own cleverness and thumbing-down the acquired lore of the centuries, they sometimes succeed in finding or proving something new. On the whole, though, they are toyers—and they toy with everything from Christ to anti-Christ.

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Before I read *Etruscan Places*, I read in Chesterton's *Heretics* the chapter on *Paganism and Mr. Lowes Dickinson*. There, after distinguishing between the neo-Paganism of Swinburne and Pater, which left only "incomparable exercises in the English language", and real paganism which is concerned with joy and song yet with a reasoned routine, G. K. C. points out that the important point is that Christianity came after Paganism. D. H. Lawrence, because he is a writer of a fixed idea, shuts his eyes to the virtues of the Church which is the supplanter of his cherished Paganism or Etruscanism. Yet the Church has taken over pagan rites and infused them with solid meaning, with hope, charity, faith, and humility, instead of with despair. D. H. Lawrence usually means by the Church the intensely Puritan sects of it, and he is one more example of the agonized and bedevilled Englishman. He is a sort of Gauguin, an isolationist loving primitive life and vital nakedness wherever he can find it in shy, out-of-the-way places. He found the remains of the Etruscan civilization, which he saw in tombs and art objects at Verceteri, Tarquinia, Vulci, and Volterra, much to his taste. His early career as miner was appealed to by having to go underground for his necrological lore. His non-moralism is always fizzing to the surface of the book, because he finds that he can talk of phallic stones and symbols. This he begins to do on page twenty-five, and makes a thorough job of it. When he speaks of the depths of religion, Etrurian or Christian, he is nebulous.

I would not suggest that this volume, so excellently illustrated by photographs, is without charm or vitality. Lawrence is usually a very clear writer, adept at terse prose pictures. His love of animal life, his descriptions of the Mediterranean and of the Maremma are appealing. He had a simple and essentially naïve soul and more than half-sensed the sickness of Western European life, that sickness of pride and greed the poisoning from which has brought on the present quite universal misery. But unfortunately he was a half-light, his beacon discovered things but did not point the way to haven, unless Paganism is still, with its ultimate despair, considered one.

JAMES W. LANE

AMID THESE STORMS *by Winston S. Churchill* (SCRIBNER'S. $3.50)

THERE are times when it seems that our civilization is becoming too complex for human management. We feel that to fill our places in the social structure we should perhaps sacrifice our lives to the mastery of a corner of man's knowledge. And yet we wonder if our need is not, as it has been in the past, for the broad experience and wisdom of the general practitioner. In *Amid These Storms* there are gathered random reminiscences and thoughts of a very general practitioner of life. An evening with it is an exhilarating experience.

In a series of essays covering such widely divergent topics as the life of Moses, early experiences in aviation, and the joys of an amateur painter, Mr. Churchill makes us feel that the possession of intelligence and a capacity for judgement based on fundamentals is a pretty good equipment—even for the post-War world. In the final essay, when he somewhat naïvely reveals his own discovery that the qualities required by a great painter are not basically different from those required by a great statesman, he gives the key of his extraordinarily versatile life.

It must not be thought from what has been said that this book contains a conscious refu-

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tation of the cult of the expert. It is from Mr. Churchill's career that one gathers evidence for this refutation; the essays simply recount bits of that career. They are conversational, not didactic. Many of them merely recount thrilling adventures with an unerring sense of drama; others contain provocative judgements on a variety of problems, past and present. All are written with a joy in effort and accomplishment, a zest in living, which is stimulating and delightful.

If one wished to be critical, one could challenge certain of the judgements and conclusions. It is not easy to agree with a number of the fundamentals. Anyone so ready as Mr. Churchill to take a definite stand on many questions, is necessarily vulnerable. Perhaps if the book professed to be profound one might accept the challenge of some of the pages. The quarrel would be a pleasure; it would not be lost in some petty detail. But as one reads these essays, one is content to be stimulated. They are too intimate for controversy; too exciting for interruption.

There are few people who can sit back and chat of one thing and another without boring their listeners. Mr. Churchill, for all his egotism and penchant for sweeping assertions, is one of them. Indeed, at the end one longs for more.

JOHN E. LOCKWOOD

A GUIDE THROUGH WORLD CHAOS

by G. D. H. Cole (KNOPF. $3.75)

THIS is a readable assortment of facts and theories about the world depression and its outcome, presented from a faintly pink or socialistic point of view. Mr. Cole believes the depression was caused by legacies from the World War (mainly war debts) and by an inherent defect in the existing economic order. This inherent defect is an "over-saving" of money in times of business prosperity, resulting in insufficient demand for goods and hence in under-consumption or overproduction. Under capitalism unemployment will continually increase because machines will replace men and consumer demand will be insufficient to keep everyone busy. There are competent descriptions of world trade and finance; of English and American banking; of taxation; of stock ownership; and of price levels; each being carried from 1920 up to the present. According to Mr. Cole, there are only two ways in which world recovery can be brought about. One is through a reorganized, planned capitalism which he pictures as politically impractical. The other is through a socialist or communist Five Year Plan. His chapters on Russia offer a competent description of the Soviet governmental structure. As the author admits, no one knows the real condition of the people; he is inclined to believe the Soviet statement that Russia's standard of living has increased thirty percent since 1913.

Mr. Cole is a follower of Mr. J. A. Hobsen, and perhaps, of his alternatives of planned capitalism and planned socialism, the latter is the only possible one. It seems reasonable to believe, however, that in the United States unplanned capitalism will blunder through. The more severe the burden of War Debts, the stronger becomes the movement for moratoriums. Once governmental interest rates are sufficiently out of joint, Great Britain goes through a national loan conversion. When wages get out of line with depression prices, Hoover and the American Federation of Labor cannot keep them up. Things want to attain equilibrium and refuse to be mismanaged long.

The lady who asks a clerk for a treatise on economics really wants a book which will

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tell her dogmatically the why and wherefore of the depression. *A Guide Through World Chaos* will please such a person. It will be popular because it is easy to follow, because it explains without qualifying its statements, because it demolishes the present order when everyone is dissatisfied and wants a change, because it is pink and pleasant, in the sense that it does not trouble the reader with even one percent of the difficulties which the New Era is bound to involve.

Whether it is sound, is another question. Every phenomenon in the field of economics is the result of a number of factors. It is the task of the economist not only to show their causal relation, but after careful research and with a judicial temperament to fix the relative importance of one factor to another. It is hard enough to do this when one is writing about a depression in the midst of one; it is impossible if one approaches the problems with a political and social philosophy as definite as Mr. Cole's, though that philosophy be of the G. O. P. protectionist, the MacDonald Liberal, or the Russian Bolsheviki theorist.

PAUL R. REYNOLDS, JR.

THE PERSONAL MEMOIRS OF JOFFRE *translated by Colonel T. Bentley Mott* (HARPERS. 2 vols. $6.00)

PERSONAL memories of military leaders in the World War have just about come to an end with Marshal Joffre's two imposing volumes, which are perhaps the key to the controversy which has raged almost since the day the War ended. For the Joffre who in 1914 was the beloved saviour of France, "Papa Joffre", has been shorn considerably by historians of the legend with which circumstances gilded him. The question has been, "Was Joffre a military genius, or a dullard?" Evidence—legendary and factual—has indicated that he was both, with a sad preponderance of the latter. Now, for the first time, Joffre himself has spoken and we are informed, as no one else could tell us, of the problems which beset him and of his decisions in face of them.

Joffre deals at length with the early stages of the War, in a simple manner befitting his character. Unmistakably his own words point to the belief that he was no genius. But it is impossible not to sympathize with the man and his problems, or not to repeat with him the words, "Pauvre Joffre!", which he uttered when things went wrong. In those perilous August days of 1914 when Joffre concentrated his main efforts in the south and the Germans, in accordance with the Schlieffen plan, were advancing through Belgium from the north, we learn some of the reasons for Joffre's apparent blindness. As early as 1911 General Michel had predicted the course of the main German manoeuvre in case of war. His prediction was rejected, and at the opening of hostilities in 1914 we find Joffre hesitating, wondering, puzzling: Where will the main German blow fall? He records General Lanrezac's fear that the enemy would make a wide outflanking movement north of the Meuse and his own reply, "that on this date, August 14th, the information we had received did not justify, for the moment, a belief in such a manoeuvre". Yet on the 15th, after receiving news from Belgium of enemy forces north of Liège, he says he wrote Lanrezac that "in my opinion nothing but good could come of his making preliminary arrangements for the move toward the north. . . ." The movement was not to take place, however, except by his own order, an order not directly forthcoming.

Joffre's refutation of Lanrezac's later state-

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ment that it was impossible not to perceive that the German manoeuvre would develop north of the Meuse leads one to believe that as time passed he became increasingly unwilling to predict, or to allow others to predict, the course of enemy invasion. He seems to have been out for facts, not wholly realizing that when they appeared it might be too late. But in face of all the contradictory information he received regarding the enemy, who can blame him? For instance, the town of Liège, with its antiquated, German-constructed forts, fell on August 9th. Yet on the 20th Joffre wonders if the forts are still capable of resistance!

For the Victory of the Marne, Joffre appears to take full credit. Generosity might have led him to share it with General Gallieni. And there are obvious contradictions and discrepancies in Joffre's records elsewhere in the book. But nevertheless it is an effort to present a true document and there is no conscious misrepresentation. Picking at it is something for military experts and War-time historians.

B. D. CUTLER

SEX IN THE ARTS: A SYMPOSIUM

edited by John Francis McDermott and Kendall B. Taft (HARPERS. $3.50)

SEX is a word too often profaned, according to the majority of the seventeen writers in this symposium. It has become a salacious word, a loose expression that is rarely without its *double entendre*. Its use ought to be restricted, says Struthers Burt, for instance, in his essay on the movies, to its biologic significance. In its place he would employ some such circumlocution as the-relationships-between-men-and-women.

Viewed with this circumlocution in mind, sex is of artistic value only in the sense that the arts involve attempts to organize the chaos of life into emotionally satisfying harmonies. Where those relationships are happy, there is little scope for the artist. Where they are productive of shame or regret or unhappiness, it is the function of the artist to make beauty out of pain, as Keats made beauty out of poverty, disease, and death.

Coming to sex in its biologic sense, the majority vote in this symposium is that sex has little place in the arts. Life, says this jury, is franker and freer in this matter than any of the arts would ever aspire to be. One notable dissentient from this verdict is V. F. Calverton. Writing on *The Literary Arts* he claims that the love-motif of the nineteenth century has given way to the sex-motif of the twentieth. Release rather than renunciation seems to him to be the technical formula for the modern *littérateur*, and he hails our current literature as embodying a new philosophy of life. Ernest Boyd, in the essay on modern biography, implicitly rejects this. Boyd says that we have been indulging in a post-War Freudian frolic. He believes that sex in biography, as in life itself, is simultaneously essential and unimportant, save when nothing else of importance is afoot. In other words, our literary folk have become hysterical over what is merely incidental in common life.

With varying degrees of candour a similar charge of hysteria is made against the painters by C. J. Bulliet, against the journalists by H. F. Pringle, against the advertising men by Silas Bent. On the other hand, Elmer Rice deplores the conservatism of the theatre. He says that the modern drama in its treatment and discussion of sex is timid, squeamish, superficial, and conventional. Struthers Burt has quite the opposite complaint against the moving-pictures. He regrets that the movie magnates are capitalizing on the fact that lubricity is almost entirely a matter of sug-

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gestion, and he cynically says that their coat-of-arms might very well be a demi-nude lady, rampant in a shower bath. Accepting the movies and the spoken drama as being closely allied in the line of representative art, the ordinary reader may find it difficult to understand how these last two writers could reach such diverse conclusions. But that is the way of symposia.

CHAS. F. RONAYNE

RICHARD WAGNER: THE STORY OF AN ARTIST *by Guy de Pourtalès* (HARPERS. $4.00)

THE problem of Richard Wagner has aspects of peculiar difficulty which few of his biographers have been able to appreciate fully. First, there is the discrepancy between the man and his work—a gulf which Wagner himself realized, for his reaction to the Duke of Weimar's oblique hint in this direction was one of bitter approval. Second, aside from the truly Herculean task of examining the documents, there is the more delicate one of sifting the grain from the chaff, always highly perilous in the case of a man whose vitality and radicalism were such as to make him a figure of bitter controversy during his lifetime. The successful solution of the first of these problems is the more difficult, since it involves nonpartisanship while solving the second. This, in Wagner's case, is extremely complicated (or rather, seems to be), for instead of politely dying once and for all in 1883, he continued to lower over the musical landscape. In addition to the perennial freshness of some of his pages, the illusion that the *Meister* was still with us was fostered by the posthumous publication of the autobiography, letters, and other extensive etcetera and by the attitude of Frau Cosima Wagner, his spiritual heiress.

To cope with the problems suggested above, as well as with the million and one smaller matters deriving from them, there is needed a man of rare intelligence and sensibility—a man capable of finding his way through a jungle of documents. The more Wagner biographies I read, the more I am inclined to exalt and glorify the name of Ernest Newman, whose *Wagner As Man and Artist* remains, after its revision eight years ago, the most sensible book, both for the general reader and the student, in English. (I except Paul Bekker's biography, which I have not read in its entirety.)

This preamble means that Guy de Pourtalès is not the man for the job, and the reader who knows the author's previous record will understand why I troubled myself to set the ordinary Wagner problems before examining the book at hand. M. de Pourtalès is of the school of Maurois, Victor Basch, and E. Barrington—to choose at random certain of his "literary" colleagues in descending order. His smaller books are easy, almost pleasant, to read, and as they have moments of vision, I saw with some satisfaction that this charming amateur was going to do a full-length biography of Richard Wagner.

M. de Pourtalès has written the biography of a hero, *i.e.,* another piece of fictional biography, and in extended form there is nothing more maddening than this *genre.* What was tolerable in three hundred generously printed pages becomes quite the opposite in four hundred pages of small, scantily leaded type. I don't know how old M. de Pourtalès is, but even if his beard reaches to his knees, he writes with that strange callowness which is typical of the young Romantics of the last century, and like them he is rather too preoccupied with the soul in that vague and shiftless way which is so

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infuriating to people who realize that even the soul must have its limits and provinces, though they be in infinity.

"As I have no pretensions to an expert knowledge of music", confesses the author, "I have refrained from discussing, analysing, and especially from passing judgement on Wagner's music. As in my previous biographical essays, my sole object has been to delineate the man, and to portray the events of a passionate life whose triumphs and agonies reverberated throughout a whole generation."

M. de Pourtalès's Wagner is unlike anything seen on land or sea. Yet it is not easy to accuse the biographer of conscious distortion. He has the sincerity of a rhapsodist, along with his partiality. Hero worshippers must be allowed their heroes, although it becomes more and more debatable, in my mind, as to whether they should be given a public altar for the burning of incense. However, the denigration of other people (the "innocent bystander" during the hectic progress of the hero's life) is a more serious matter. In the present instance, I apologize to the ghosts of Minna Wagner and Hans von Bülow for M. de Pourtalès's misunderstanding of them and of their motives.

WALLACE BROCKWAY

OUT OF THE PAST OF GREECE AND ROME *by Michael I. Rostovtzeff* (YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS. $2.00)

PROFESSOR ROSTOVTZEFF has turned his great knowledge as an archaeologist and his understanding as a historian to the sorest problem in our educational system: how to persuade the American boy that there is pleasure in the use of his mind or, as it might be phrased, how to victual the intelligent thirteen-year-old with sufficient interests to carry him across that Great American Desert of the mind, the secondary-school age.

He has written this little book primarily to revivify the ancient world for older boys and girls. His method is the opposite of the great sweep attempted by Breasted in his *Conquest of Civilization*. He has taken six focal spots in Greco-Roman life and described them in detail. A superb study of Olympia and the Games re-creates the life of the great age in Greece. The outer Greek world is represented in three chapters. One describes Messina as typical of Greek settlements in the West. A second draws a very complete picture of the life of Greeks and Scythians on the Black Sea, a special field in which Rostovtzeff stands alone in this country. A third, the longest in the book, describes Alexandria in the energetic days of the first Ptolemies and the life of a Greek settler during the Greek rehabilitation of Egypt, based upon the correspondence of the colonist Zenon discovered at Philadelphia in the Fayum. Pompeii is chosen to represent the Roman world and the caravan cities of Palmyra and Petra its outer fringes, where for a brief time the Mediterranean and the Orient flowed together in brilliant, unstable mixture.

The result is extraordinarily interesting. Professor Rostovtzeff is able to make equally real the desolate colonnades of ruined Palmyra seen through the haze of blowing sand, and the life which once stirred in its streets. His chapters on Alexandria and the Fayum, or on Olympia, give one the same sensation that the outlander feels on dropping into Times Square—a plunge into a rushing, vital, slightly alien but delightful world. It is a valuable book for any reader. The qualities which make its author a true historian, the sense of slow growth and decay, the positive presence of the earth, the understanding of human life as more than just economics or

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politics, but composed of time and the earth, the struggle to earn a living, ideas, feelings, occasional wars, people moving from place to place and combining into shifting organizations to meet their needs—all this makes good reading for a child or for an adult.

An unfortunate style, however, may prevent the book from being so effective as it deserves to be: a combination of overloading and oversimplifying.

The impression of a book read at twelve or thirteen is so lasting that this reviewer also regrets one omission. European civilization is treated throughout, in the old way, as built entirely upon Greek life. Since Christianity is a not inconsiderable force in the building of Europe, and since there is Oriental influence even in the Parthenon, it seems a pity that the chapters on the Greek and Roman Orient imply that Greece is the source of all things.

E. P. RICHARDSON

TWILIGHT OF ROYALTY *by Alexander, Grand Duke of Russia* (LONG & SMITH. $3.00)

IN *Twilight of Royalty* the Grand Duke Alexander elaborates some of the ideas he first suggested in his autobiography, *Once a Grand Duke*. More than most men, Alexander has had a wide opportunity to study the theory and practice of monarchy. He stood close to the late Czar Nicholas II during the tragic years of the latter's reign, and he is related, either directly or by marriage, to nearly every ruling house in Europe. He has witnessed the fall of monarchies, but he remains, at heart, a sincere partisan of the principles of absolutism. He has watched the muddled efforts of demagogues to organize more efficient forms of governments, and is persuaded that the cycle of history will restore many of the dynasties now in the discard.

Alexander has devoted this volume to an explanation of his faith, which he maintains in the darkest hour of absolutism, and it must be admitted that he has made out an excellent case. Not only is he a mature and thoughtful observer of historic events, but he displays a breadth and tolerance which one believes rare among his kin. He knows what the business of ruling involves, and he sets forth his opinions as crisply and persuasively as one could desire.

It may be said in passing that there is little false sentimentality in his view. "A ruler," he says, "if he wants to be a ruler not in name only, must be ruthless. Not an ideal husband, not a loving father, not a fancier of flowers, not a modern edition of Marcus Aurelius, not a noble exponent of the principles of enlightened absolutism, but a cunning tactician capable of outsmarting the biggest cheats among his ministers and not ashamed to draw on the vast deposits of hatred and jingoism when no other course is open for quick and decisive action."

By way of illustrating this thesis, Alexander passes in review the present European rulers, those who have been dispossessed of their thrones, and those who still reign. He examines, in each instance, the reasons for the downfall of a particular monarch, or the extremely difficult technique by which he still retains possession of his inherited authority. The review is an interesting one. The longest, and perhaps the most illuminating, inquiry is devoted to the case of King Alfonso of Spain, whom Alexander regards as one of the most sincere and enlightened of the royal tight-rope walkers. In it he discovers some excellent evidence in support of his theories of monarchy, and finds an opportunity to display his own very distinguished talents as a journalist.

MARGARET WALLACE

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SOUTH AMERICAN MEDITATIONS *by Count Hermann Keyserling* (HARPERS. $3.50)

SOUTH AMERICA has furnished Count Keyserling with an admirable jumping-off place for his series of speculations "on hell and heaven in the soul of man", but it should be said at the outset that this is its only connection with the book. Even less than in the rambling *Travel Diary of a Philosopher* has the Count held himself to his proclaimed locale. Given, however, an analogous geographical *raison d'être* for his philosophy, he has progressed in this newest book far beyond the introvert preciosity of the pre-War *Travel Diary*. He felt himself drawn to South America as the "continent of the third stage of creation", as the fine point of balance between the violent primitivism of the jungle and the refined, contemplative realism of the Mediterranean. That he found what he sought is the substance of these *Meditations*, which seem in truth to reflect every reasonable philosophical reaction to such a premise. The more's the pity that their inexcusable diffuseness will make them, for the intelligent man, the next thing to unreadable.

Nevertheless, it must be admitted that Count Keyserling has here given us the most complete exposition of his philosophy which he has yet set down. Briefly, he offers in answer to the Spenglerian theme of decline and irreducible destiny an attitude of rather weary detachment from actuality, a flight from life as it is to an imaginary status halfway between the closeness-to-Earth of the Amazon and the lazy decadence of Iberia. In the *Gana*—the passive inner will of the Spaniard and Spanish-American—he finds the sublimation of the spirit co-operating, as it were, with the being, because neither does anything it does not want to. And in the equally Spanish *Delicadeza* he finds the perfect personal expression of inactive participation, a sort of epitome of the ideal world picture which he attempts to unfold.

Unfortunately the world has moved further than the Herr Graf in the years since his world cruise early in the century. If there is to be an answer to Spengler, it will have to come out of a philosophy which does not require the solitude of mountain tops, or the heated leisure of the jungle, or, above all, an economic freedom of which Count Keyserling seems to be one of a handful of remaining possessors. The reply to *The Decline of the West* will have to be the same serious morphology of history and thought as Spengler, and will need to manifest the same deep concern with human actualities as Spengler does. And it can be said without doubt that Count Keyserling appears to be neither fitted nor inclined to speak thus.

If this seems a blank prospect, there is yet hope in the positive conviction that Spengler, now that the first dark days of his darker destiny are upon us, is still, by our own grace, only an alternative, not an ultimatum. Somewhere in the hypothesis of the contrary lies the kernel which can be nourished into leadership, leadership to a heroic recapture of lost standards and lost sanctions. And though one cannot look to Count Keyserling for either this nourishment or this leadership, one can praise him as one of the poets of the transition. For if his philosophy is misleadingly hopeful, it is so in the same pleasant sense as is that of a host of poetic thinkers from Lao-Tse to Rabindranath Tagore—and it has as little concern with life and as few consequences. It is for this quality of sunny, cloudless detachment that the *Meditations* are worth reading, although one might have preferred shorter essays or, even better, blank verse. ALFRED M. FRANKFURTER

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FIVE NOVELS: *by Dorothea Brande*

In a fine, formal, eighteenth-century prose, with fewer adjectives to the book than the average writer uses in a chapter, Storm Jameson has written three long stories and issued them under the title *Women Against Men* (Knopf. $2.50). The title holds the only misleading words in the volume. The women of these stories are no more against men than they are against other women, or against the scheme of the universe, and the title, with its hint of fusty feminism, gives no promise of the real character of the book. For at last here are stories about women by a woman which are honest and unsentimental.

Miss Jameson may have to suffer for "speaking out" like this. She has been as plain-spoken about her heroines as about those at whose hands they suffered. This means that none of the stories offers any restful oasis for illusions, no nook in which the tender-hearted can rest. The tawdry vulgarian of *Delicate Monster*, a woman novelist who turns her lovers and friends into "copy" and uses lovers, husbands, child, and friend without scruple is one thing. We have all had the pleasure of disliking these villainesses before. But what of the heroine—herself a writer, the childhood friend of the "monster", the narrator of the story? She is drawn as relentlessly as Victoria. Belonging in many ways to a higher order of being, more sensitive, frequently scrupulous, by preference fastidious, when she is robbed of her husband by her predatory friend she shows traits as inadmirable as any of Victoria's own: under jealousy she sets traps, indulges in hysterics, reads letters and notebooks. But how dreadful! you may exclaim. Does Miss Storm Jameson believe that decent women are like this? Read the story; if at the conclusion you still hold that Storm Jameson is unfair or inaccurate you are one of two things: one of them is "remarkably fortunate".

The second story is as unlike the first as possible. *The Single Heart* is a love story of a girl who, falling in love with a young workman after her marriage, spends the rest of her life and all her strength to get the man she loves, and to keep him. It is unbearably poignant; Storm Jameson has done studies of jealousy before, but none as good as this. The lover, whom Emily marries after her husband's early death, and whose career she promotes to her own last breath, deceives her again and again; and again and again she takes him back to her arms in spite of her agonizing jealousy. If that were all, we should feel that we had heard this story of a betrayed and noble woman more than once before: but Miss Jameson goes on to tell us that Emily had steadily deceived both her lover and her husband, feeling not the least scruple about it, hardly realizing that she was doing it, since she felt that she was acting to her lover's advantage. Yet her heart is very nearly broken when she discovers that Evan has been consoling himself trivially while she travels in America with her husband.

This is abandoning conventional novel psychology with a vengeance; yet it is done so well that you accept all the testimony. The three main characters are, under different aspects, detestable, admirable, and pathetic.

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Miss Jameson does not underline the irony or palliate the double-dealing: she tells what one woman in love was like, and draws a good portrait. Again, if you are able to finish *The Single Heart* convinced that Emily is not recognizably feminine, you are, to say the least of it, lucky.

The last story in the book is *A Day Off*. In its way it is as successful as the other two, and, since the specimen of femininity being examined in this case is an aging street-walker, it is likely to get more wholehearted approval than the other two tales. For some time it has been a literary fashion to be frank about such poor drabs: so much so that the critics know now that such honesty is all right, and one out of every two reviewers will undoubtedly hold that Miss Jameson has been at her most effective in capturing the essence of the dim-witted, distraught creature whose last lover has deserted her. It seems to me to have less of the bitter, tonic and bracing after-effect than either of the other two.

YOUNG WOMAN OF 1914, by Arnold Zweig (Viking. $2.50) is one of the *Sergeant Grischa* tetralogy. Its story is simple: lovers are separated by the War and the woman comes to maturity by being forced into independent action during the same months that her lover, who had been of a radical turn, is finding a retrogressive peace of mind in having his thinking done for him by his military superiors. Herr Zweig asks particularly that we be careful not to judge of the design of the entire work prematurely, so there is little more that can be said. Parts of the book have a pleasant, *gemütlich* note, and the growth of Lenore's love with her maturity is well indicated.

Premature or not, it is impossible to refrain from a few unregenerate considerations; reflections, for instance, on how hardy and ineradicable a growth sentimentality is. The book-jacket speaks of *Young Woman of 1914* as "so tender an idyll". Certainly every review to date has mentioned its pastoral quality, and, in spots, the novel deserves it. But how idylls have changed! THE BOOKMAN is a family magazine, and all of Herr Zweig's tender and sentimental ponderings on the subject of abortion are not suitable to its pages; suffice it to say that after presenting all the arguments about the social and personal disadvantages of bearing an unwanted child, Herr Zweig sobs for page on page when Lenore finally undergoes the drastic remedy.

WEEKS AGO the English reviews of "Francis Iles's" *Before the Fact* (Doubleday, Doran. $2.00) raised curiosity to fever pitch. Now it has been brought out here, and has been made a Crime Club selection. It is fully as remarkable a story as its reviews indicated. For sheer, nightmarish horror it has seldom been surpassed. Mr. Iles (the name is commonly known to be a pseudonym) has written of a murderer as his wife knows him. Johnnie Aysgarth is charming, weak, boyishly engaging and a moral imbecile. Lina, who marries him against her parents' better sense, is thoroughly infatuated before she has the faintest idea of his character.

Step by step Lina sinks into the bog, venturing on it first in a vain, loving attempt to save Johnnie. Her sanity is his chief accomplice; she cannot believe her senses' evidence. Repeatedly her imagination is baulked by the impossibility of comprehending her husband. Later, by innumerable concessions, her own character is undermined. She remains with him to be his victim, half reluctant, half willing.

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Before the Fact is remarkably well done; it induces such a there-but-for-the-grace-of-God sensation that one remains shivering for hours. But somehow it seems an unlikely choice to be sent to the Old Guard of detective-story lovers.

AND THE HEROINE of Eden Phillpotts's *Bred in the Bone* (Macmillan. $2.00) is a murderess, and the daughter of a murderer. She is no weak and charming scapegrace; rather a rustic Lady Macbeth with no somnambulistic remorse. Avis Ullathorne was engaged to one brother before she met the other; when she had met Peter, her earlier lover was doomed. For her and her ambition, Peter turned fratricide. Scotland Yard sends its best detective; Avis is more than a match for him. She is defeated by Peter's religious fanaticism, as much a part of his inheritance as ruthlessness is of hers.

From page to page Mr. Phillpotts's story is credible. The passionate love of Peter and Avis for each other is thoroughly convincing; indeed the whole character of Avis is consistent. But with the book closed doubt about Peter's share in the murder begins. A longer introduction, giving the reader time to be persuaded of Peter's weakness, might have made this as powerful as Mr. Iles's gruesome masterpiece.

THIS TIME Mr. John Erskine has chosen to drag his trail across the story of Tristan and Isolde. (*Tristan and Isolde*. Bobbs-Merrill. $2.50). He subtitles his version *Restoring Palamede*—but we all know what that means. Palamede becomes a half-witted paynim Galahad, in the true Erskine tradition. At that, I prefer the alterations on Palamede to those on Isolde, Tristan, and Brangain. It is Mr. Erskine's delicate notion that Isolde and Tristan were lovers before ever Isolde came to Tintagel, and that she married Mark as a convenient shield for the affair. This touch, however, is cleanly and decorous beside the fate of Brangain at Mr. Erskine's hands. Brangain (broad-minded modern liberal that she is, and generous to a fault) substitutes for Isolde on her wedding-night, so that King Mark (well fuddled in advance) shall not guess that he has been duped!

It is impossible to divine a reason for this passion to vulgarize the heroic. Surely it is not because our age is suffering from an excess of romantic chivalry. If there are mature readers who like this kind of sniggering re-telling of old tales, presumably they will not be further corrupted by the latest example. But the thought that there are actually boys and girls in this country who will first meet Tristan and Isolde by courtesy of Mr. Erskine is enough to break one's heart.

DOROTHEA BRANDE

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KEEPING UP WITH THE NOVELISTS

NEVER ASK THE END *by Isabel Paterson* (MORROW. $2.50)

IDEAS are the strength and the weakness of Isabel Paterson's novel. The heroine, Marta Brown, is a *cérébrale*. She exists in a dazzle of intellectual light, tossing off "good things" as a pinwheel emits sparks and flame, yet having, unlike the pinwheel, her own inward glow, her own constant center of force, her own character and essence, her own individual and baffling quality. And the same may be said of the book. Abundantly garnished with good things of Mrs. Paterson's own and good things she has gleaned here and there, *Never Ask the End* looms larger in retrospect than a mere aggregate of good things; it creates the impression of life and intrinsic force, of original power, like something transfused and welded and informed by creative heat at the core. Set beside such a purely intellectual fabric as *Point Counter Point*, it emerges at once as, not merely a novel of ideas, but a novel with *an* idea, with a unique intellectual and emotional quality, with a spirit and atmosphere that are wholly its own, with—to employ a term that excessive use has debased—a *vital conception.*

Marta Brown, sojourning briefly in Paris, has a chance to renew her acquaintance with Russell Girard who, as "technical director for all of Europe", is pursuing his national destiny in seeing that electric iceboxes are installed in the Vatican. Marta introduces Russell to Pauline Gardiner, with whom, in spite of keen rivalry in their earlier days, she has all her life remained upon friendly terms. Pauline feels inferior because Marta was briefly married to the man Pauline wanted to marry. Both women are attracted by Russell, and that is the story, if the story can be said to matter. The interest for this reader is not in what happens but in the manner of its happening, in the incidentals, in the probing of everyone's past, of everyone's present, and of everyone's imminent future, above all in the special tenderness and compunction with which the three treat one another.

Russell is already grey. He has lost his enjoyment of dancing. He can no longer drink champagne. He needs rest but is destined to find it, if at all, in an early grave. His long deferred business success leaves him still unable to protect himself against infractions of his privacy on the part of preposterous fellow Americans in Antwerp. Marta is forty-one. Indeed all three are middle-aged, all exceptionally worn and battered, all long since estranged from respective husbands and wives. Their years have been strewn with havoc as only the years of the lives of Americans of their generation are capable of being strewn. Mrs. Paterson has examined with care their difficulties, not excluding the difficulties which all human beings must encounter in love and in marriage. But she finds something very special about this trio. Their unique difficulty is just their being Americans and their having been required to live in their single lifetimes through a social evolution which, for Europe, dates as far back as Vercingetorix and which, nevertheless and moreover, is reaching its term in Europe only under the spur of Amer-

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ican leadership. There they sit, Marta, Russ, and Pauline, in the ragged garment of their forty corrosive years. They have seen the last of the pioneers of the Northwest, the rise of the captains of industry, women's rights, women's struggle for jobs, the War, the new conquest of Europe, the American world dictatorship or directorate. They have come too far and too fast and are weary now. They are not beyond love and rivalry, but they make love and outwit rivals with tenderness and compunction like survivors from the same wreck. Friendship really means more, the deep tie of their known and shared and their equally common conjectured experience.

"To be always young, and lightfooted, and in love. But we were none of these things. *Yet we valued each other. We were glad of each other.*"

When Pauline abdicates and Marta and Russ are left to enjoy the brief span of their amative autumn, Marta's feeling is rueful rather than triumphant. She misses her friend. She is sad and solicitous for her. Three was better than two. In her feeling for Russell there is more of rueful solicitude than of the fervour of passion. They are all birds of passage, sojourners briefly together in a world of inexorable change. In this rueful tenderness I discern a peculiar beauty, which, with all it implies, may be called the idea of the book. It imposes itself insidiously on the reader as an idea in fiction should. And when the reader finishes he is left with a special emotion that has nothing to do with the brilliance of the surface over which he has been conducted, that is even, perhaps, at some moments obscured by that surface, as though the idea of the book were revealed between flashes of shifting water like some creature threading its inscrutable course on the weedy bottom, among the sea caves.

ROBERTS TAPLEY

IN TRAGIC LIFE *by Vardis Fisher* (THE CAXTON PRINTERS. $2.50)

VRIDAR HUNTER was born in the Wilderness, of parents who were determined that their children should have greater advantages than they themselves enjoyed. For his hundred acres of bottomland, "a third of which was a cottonwood island, a third of which was swamp and meadow, and a third of which was dry and hot and brush-covered earth", Joe Hunter, Vridar's father, had paid seven dollars and a wornout horse. It was a lonely spot, a great hole sunk among the mountains.

It was Joe Hunter's dream to make a fertile, ordered farm of this wilderness. He was taciturn, mighty, and single-purposed. He worked from before dawn until midnight year in and year out. Whenever he had an hour to spare he cleared new soil for planting. After supper he would work by lantern light. For a dollar a head per year he tended cattle grazing on the uplands and he paid for every one which was lost. He bought an old saw-mill and operated it on a hair-margin of profit. When his wife, Prudence, heard a wagon approaching she would drop her housework, run the half-mile to the ferry, and ferry the customers over. Each trip took her forty minutes and she sometimes made ten trips during the day.

It was said of Prudence that she could kill a dozen men working. She could and often did carry two four-gallon pails of water from the spring. She made cheese and with eggs peddled it on three-day trips through the valley, often sleeping by the roadside or in her wagon. This was the money that was to put her children through school.

In spite of the crudities and rawness of this wild farm, she remained a rigid Puritan. She preached to her eldest son, Vridar, the sacredness of womanhood, gulled him with the

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stork fable, and made him promise to be purer and finer than other men.

Vridar was a sensitive child. The wilderness terrified him, darkness terrified him. When he saw blood he fainted or gagged. But his pride upheld him. He was his mother's little man.

In a welter of nausea and loathing he tugged on a rope while his father operated upon the bellowing cattle; insane with fear he fought for his younger brother when the school bullies called him cross-eyed. He was at the same time attracted and repulsed by all lustiness. His ego made him determined to share in everything. He recoiled, hesitated, and then fearfully crept forward. He watched a kinsman chop off a mangled hand, he watched another in a rough and tumble fight bite off his opponent's finger and rising with an insane grin spit it forth upon the ground. His stomach crawled but Vridar watched.

The vice of adolescence held him fast. He read in a quack's pamphlet that the practice would drive him mad. It almost did. It drove him howling and witless out into the open, it threw him into feverish trances of dread. It gave him, who feared others, a terror of himself. On the verge of insanity at the age of eighteen he is rescued by a friend's Rabelaisian laughter at his world of sins and fears, and Vridar Hunter solemnly sets himself the task of abolishing all fear from his life.

It is to be doubted whether the peculiar phobias and idiosyncrasies of any individual can dominate in the gigantic drama of the American pioneers. And in these times especially, when the story of the hysterical and hyper-sensitive idealist is so familiar, Vridar Hunter's spiritual difficulties seem of less import than the other contents of this exceptional novel. For this is no ordinary book. Mr. Fisher has written strikingly of a great subject, of the appalling and beautiful Wilderness and of the men and women who conquered it. He has remembered them, the way they talked and moved, the loneliness in their faces as winter came on, their astonishing adaptability in difficulty, the grim laconic quality of their heroism, their coarseness and lewdness and wildness. These were the pioneers and they belonged to that land and time. Vridar did not.

There is one thing more. Readers who remember *Look Homeward, Angel* will note passages here and there which startlingly recall that great work. This is to be deplored, for Mr. Fisher has too much to say in his own right to lean on anyone else. *In Tragic Life*, which is the first of a tetralogy, ranks with the best work of our young writers. It is strong and vital and holds forth great promise for its sequels.

JOHN BRONSON

DEATH AND THE LOVER *by Hermann Hesse* (DODD MEAD. $2.50)

MODERN psychologists tell us that a nostalgia for the past, love of myths and fairy tales, our art and religion are all signs that we are still children; that the leading races of the world are just arriving at adolescence. Herr Hesse knows all this and a great deal more psychology to boot. In fact, he has used much of its findings in constructing this story of the life of a German artist of the Middle Ages. But his knowledge of psychology has not prevented him from intoning a pantheistic hymn to the joys of the flesh and the manifestations of nature nor from the artist's homage to the wonderfully simple and devout life of the Middle Ages which is the essential *raison d'être* of *Death and the Lover*.

Its protagonist, Goldmund, was placed by his father in the Mariabrunn cloister and told

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that he must expiate his mother's sins by passing his life as a monk. Mariabrunn was a full-bodied and ancient cloister. Every branch of science and art was pursued and taught there; it held worldly and unworldly, learned and lay monks within its walls; and, among other things, it was variously noted for its exorcists and devil-chasers, for a miracle worker who healed the sick, for the beauty of its plain chaunt, and for its pike broth and stag's liver pasty. Yet Goldmund was so completely a sensualist and spiritually so athirst for the adventures of the world that even this wide compass of life could not hold him. It was his friend and complement, Narziss, the man of intellect, who forced Goldmund to realize that he was not cut out for a monk. The memory of his mother came back to him and with it a passionate love for all women.

He left the cloister and his wanderings began. Lusty, joyful, beautiful in his youth, he roamed up and down the Empire. His food he took where he found it—an unmilked cow or goat, a few ears of corn from a standing field, nuts, fruit, berries to be had for the gathering, an occasional begged crust, or a meal to be earned by the doing of chores. The fields or a convenient haystack were his bed, love his pursuit. Women came to him at a glance or a smile and from each of them he enriched his knowledge of love.

A winter night as he lay on a bed of pine boughs his fellow traveller tried to rob him, and Goldmund stabbed the thief to death. For days after he ran wild in the deep-snowed forests, starving and freezing and haunted by the terror of death. Then one day he saw a Madonna carved in wood in which were arrested and held a thousand shades of pain and sweetness and he knew he must become a woodcarver to carve out and fix the vision that was growing in him.

Of his apprenticeship to the master-carver Nicholas, of his work and further wanderings, of the bubonic plague when he passed amid the dead, the dying and the panic-stricken living, always adding new values to his vision of Eve, the great earth woman, of his return to Mariabrunn and to his friend Narziss there is not space here to speak. It will have to suffice to say that *Death and the Lover* is an exceptionally rich and satisfying story, one that partakes of the quality of legendry and of the long-sustained melodic spirit of other times. Written in the sensitive, colourful, and harmonious prose for which Hermann Hesse is noted, and excellently translated by Geoffrey Dunlop, it should prove a delight to those readers who are not exclusively bound to the pursuit of modern reality.

JOHN BRONSON

THE ANXIOUS DAYS *by Philip Gibbs*
(DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.50)

On the deck of the *Rajputano* as it slipped into Tilbury Dock one May evening stood a man of fifty whose lean bronzed face, clear blue eyes, and erect carriage would have proclaimed him a military hero even without the empty sleeve tucked into his coat pocket. This was Commander Compton returning after five years on a Borneo plantation to his daughter Madge and England.

England had changed and the approaching economic crisis emphasized the changes. Sex, atheism, materialism were in the air. Particularly sex. The Commander was always running into sex. He would have liked to have his Madge all to himself but there were young men—especially one, Simon Lambert, who read D. H. Lawrence, Aldous Huxley, and Bertrand Russell, and liked to kiss Madge. It made the Commander feel pretty

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bad to think that Simon Lambert had carnal intentions toward his daughter but when Simon couldn't see Madge *he* became so unhappy that his parents interceded for him with the Commander and the Commander, true-blue at heart, invited Simon to stay with him on his farm.

In the meantime the depression was going on. The Commander and Simon had some pretty sharp tiffs over patriotism, tradition, discipline, truth, honour, decency, and the like but each benefited from the exchange. Finally married to Madge, Simon began to believe in God and decided to run for Parliament. "'I'd like to stand by you tonight, old man,' said Compton, gripping his arm." The Commander expressed his emotions that way—by arm-grippings and salutes. Never effusive, of course. Terse.

So Simon is elected, a lovely lady of thirty proposes to the Commander, and self-sacrifice and discipline save the day for old England. "Commander Compton, ex-naval man, an old-fashioned gentleman, a simple soul, raised his hand in salute to the spirit of his own folk."

Mr. Gibbs has stated that his object in writing this novel was to dramatize and humanize the history of the depression. Whether or not he actually cherished this singular ambition or simply fancied that the depression would be the best prop for an uninspired romance, *The Anxious Days* seems to me one of the dullest, most hackneyed, and lifeless novels I have ever read.

JOHN BRONSON

THE HEARTLESS LAND *by James Stern* (MACMILLAN. $2.00)

RHODESIA, the keystone of Cecil Rhodes's South African empire, is a forbidding place. Almost incredibly remote, in these days of air travel (as far from Cape Town by train as New York is from San Francisco, and Cape Town three weeks away from London); lonely, because of the sparseness of its settlement; desiccated by months of blinding sun and long hot nights: it may well be called a heartless land. Although Mr. Stern personifies it nowhere except in his title, one finds difficulty in writing about his book without doing so, for in each of his stories the Land is the central character, formidable, stolid, insolent, far overpeering the insolence of its little white lords.

To Americans not many generations away from a frontier, and conscious of frontier influences still active in our civilization, the people of *The Heartless Land* ought not to seem as strange as Mr. Stern makes them. That this is a criticism of Mr. Stern as well as of his subject-matter is obvious. It is equally obvious that Africa affected him with the vividness and horror of a nightmare, and that he has conveyed his impressions powerfully. The reader experiences with him in the person of his boy protagonists (all the same character, by the way, with the emphasis shifted and the name and circumstances changed) the heat, the unremitting labour, the dust, the cruelty, and the loneliness. Below this heavy African air, the structure of the stories is that of travellers' tales, and the characters grotesque silhouettes. Many of them are misfits, like Charles Congreve, Esquire, who "was neither as likeable nor as rich a man as his neighbours were, and . . . they were as much aware of this as he was", and who, having married his housemaid and hastily emigrated, played lord of the manor to a secretly contemptuous audience of a dreadful girl-child, a nursemaid, a foreman, and a neighbouring storekeeper.

The Man Who Was Loved belongs to a type well-known in outlying communities

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and places of shifting population, the self-made social arbiter. "He was the one man Everyone knew. Had there been a dozen majors, he would still have remained The Major." It is always a Major (frequently, indeed, a British army officer) who welcomes acceptable newcomers, whose acquaintanceship conveys social approval, to whom one goes for counsel, who is popular with everyone, whose idiosyncrasies are loved, who is the hero of all the best anecdotes. The peculiarity of Mr. Stern's Major is an ability to kill snakes by whirling them like a rope and cracking off their heads. Rhodesia is the habitat of the Mamba, a very dangerous and deadly snake: here is the traveller's tale. Mr. Stern twists it into a biting satire on the straw society of a provincial government town.

The best of the tales, and the most human, is *The Outcasts*, which sets forth the extent and convergence of the lives of four people —an Irish widow, a Jewish storekeeper, and two native boys—into one of the most miserable of human alliances, that of a common misfortune.

When a writer takes British colonial life for his subject, the reader's first thought is in the direction of Kipling. Mr. Stern is, as it ought to be plain, not at all like Kipling. Imperialism is no longer a force, either in politics or in literature. The conditions he is dealing with are an aftermath of imperialist expansion, and his approach is like that of a spectator at the scene of a recent disaster, staring in fascinated horror at the wreckage. One of his young men goes out, freshly ambitious from an agricultural school, to make a great success in Africa. He begins work feeling "wholly ridiculous. Here he was in his well-fitting grey flannels, coloured jersey and tie, accompanied by a man whose home was this strange place, being watched, as though he, Hugh, were stranger than truth, by a one-eyed black monster to whom he could not speak and with whom he was about to be sent away to make a gate!" The humiliating part of it was that Hugh, whose people had all been practical farmers, hadn't the least idea how to make a gate. However, he grits his teeth, remembering his well-learned imperialism. "England and its Elliots would farm the world, by fair means or very foul!" The result is very far from what Kipling would have made it.

RUTH JANET BARBER

FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES *by Lloyd C. Douglas* (HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN. $2.50)

MR. DOUGLAS'S book, in method and intention, is like a very successful revivalist meeting. Its author is out to convert us, and he opens on a gentle and familiar note, lulling us with familiar words before he takes his coat off and gets to work on us. We are shown a young girl in Northern Indiana, married secretly, and dying in childbirth. Her son is brought up, hating the father he has never seen, the father who sends his uncle and aunt—the Reverend Miles and Mrs. Brumm—one thousand dollars a year for the boy's maintenance and education. This money the precious couple use for their own purposes.

It is a sad world for Ferdinand ("Dinny") Brumm. Its atmosphere is evidently false and the child sees through its shams. But it is not until page 69 that its quietness is shattered. "I've got to go it alone", says Dinny. "I *can* go it alone! I *will* go it alone! *You see if I don't! Damn you all!*"

As I read these words, my spirits sank. Mr. Douglas, it seemed, was rolling up his sleeves.

I mean no disrespect to Mr. Douglas. He is genuine and sincere, and has no selfish axe to

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grind. The gospel he preaches is a modern gospel for a modern world; the religion he calls for is a religion where good works count for more than faith; the Devil he is after is the same Devil which churches, economists, and politicians have, in their several ways, all tried to exorcize. Disillusion, Depression, and Modernism are the favourite words for it; but to Mr. Douglas it is just the Devil, and he sees it but dimly.

And dimly and sorrowfully—as the story brought me to Dinny's enrollment at Magnolia College—I realized the truth . . . Mr. Douglas had a Message. It was not at this point a definite Message; but all the characters had begun to assume those noisy shapes which are essential to evangelical fiction. Here was an embittered and brilliant young man, at odds with his world, and not able to set himself right with it. In defense of his President—the only real man on the faculty—Dinny the football star blacks the eyes of the Y.M.C.A. leader.

We find him next in New York. After serving his time as a newspaper reporter he has taken to writing syndicated satires (of which Mr. Douglas gives us one ill-advised example) called *Unfrosted Persimmons* and *Green Cheese*. In these he daily flays the world.

Here the novel becomes strident; the air is loud with intellectual combat; the Devil has appeared, formless but vast and menacing:—

> . . . a quadrennium of sentimental superlatives ranging all the way from lush and morbid pathos and the agony of hair-tearing despair to the loud and hysterical hallelujahs of Utopianism at its ultimate peak of drooling idiocy. . . .

Against this polysyllabic monster Dinny is in arms; against this monster, too, Mr. Douglas is prepared to do battle. He is pounding the pulpit now, and it is time for his readers either to hear the call or leave. I lingered until page 223 where the Devil, in one of his minor manifestations, has his tail badly twisted with:—

> Modernism—modernistic painting! Cubist stuff! . . . Nobody can fool me any more about that. . . . This latest whelp of modernism is nothing but an idiot begotten of Gin and Geometry.

At this point I decided to leave.

A cursory examination of the rest of the book revealed Dinny's conversion. A letter, left by his mother in the secret drawer of his desk brings him to the light. He goes back to Indiana to make peace with his enemies.

And here Mr. Douglas's message at last takes shape: "Love one another; forgive as you would be forgiven." It is a message which, in times so out of joint as these, none of us can ignore and none can ridicule; if it were followed today we should have few troubles to contend with. But in a novel it seems very out of place, very vain, very repetitious.

GEORGE DANGERFIELD

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THE BOOKMAN'S GUIDE TO FICTION

General

NEVER ASK THE END *by Isabel Paterson* (Morrow)*
A novel of unique intellectual and emotional quality, about a trio of middle-aged and problem-ridden Americans living abroad. Reviewed on page 89.

IN TRAGIC LIFE *by Vardis Fisher* (The Caxton Printers)*
The striking story of a sensitive child brought up in the Wilderness and his struggle to banish fear from his life. Reviewed on page 90.

DEATH AND THE LOVER *by Hermann Hesse* (Dodd, Mead)*
Rich and satisfying novel of a young German artist in the Middle Ages that will delight those who are not too closely bound down to present reality. Reviewed on page 91.

BEFORE THE FACT *by Francis Iles* (Doubleday, Doran)
A remarkable story about a murderer as his wife knows him. Gripping and effective, but not meant for those who dislike nightmares. Reviewed on page 87.

YOUNG WOMAN OF 1914 *by Arnold Zweig* (Viking)*
Another volume in Herr Zweig's *Sergeant Grischa* tetralogy, this one being about a woman separated from her lover by the War and forced into independent action. Reviewed on page 87.

BRED IN THE BONE *by Eden Phillpotts* (Macmillan)
A ruthless and unregenerate murderess serves as heroine for a love story set in England. Reviewed on page 88.

TRISTAN AND ISOLDE *by John Erskine* (Bobbs-Merrill)*
Mr. Erskine rewrites the greatest love story in the world in the vein with which his readers are familiar. Reviewed on page 88.

THE ANXIOUS DAYS *by Philip Gibbs* (Doubleday, Doran)*
Mr. Gibbs's contribution to the dramatization and humanization of the history of the depression, with a love story running through. Reviewed on page 92.

FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES *by Lloyd C. Douglas* (Houghton, Mifflin)*
A homily in the form of a novel about a boy who makes his way in the world alone. By the author of *Magnificent Obsession*. Reviewed on page 94.

GREENBANKS *by Dorothy Whipple* (Farrar & Rinehart)
A gentle matriarch in an English novel that deserves all the praise it has had abroad. Reviewed last month.

HUMAN BEING *by Christopher Morley* (Doubleday, Doran)*
A summary of our time in a novel about a man whose interest lies in his averageness and sheer lack of distinction. Reviewed last month.

THE HOUSE UNDER THE WATER *by Francis Brett Young* (Harpers)*
A novel in the grand romantic manner, built for solid enjoyment and set on an estate in Wales, Reviewed last month.

GIANTS SHOULD BE GELDED *by Bogart Carlaw* (Putnam)*
Powerful and imaginative exploration of the feelings and thoughts of a boy whose growth is abnormal but who otherwise is not. Reviewed last month.

WANTON MALLY *by Booth Tarkington* (Doubleday, Doran)
Two portraits inspire Mr. Tarkington to a pretty little romance of the seventeenth century. Reviewed last month.

GOD'S ANGRY MAN *by Leonard Ehrlich* (Simon & Schuster)*
A detailed and solid novel about John Brown of Harper's Ferry. Reviewed last month.

FAREWELL MISS JULIE LOGAN *by J. M. Barrie* (Scribner's. $1.00)
Barrie's first story in many years, one of his matchless romances, of a long-legged young minister, not slow in the up-take but "cautious", in a snow-bound Scotch valley. Beautifully printed and bound, most emphatically not to be missed by any Barrie-lover or Jacobite.

THE CAT WHO SAW GOD *by Anna Gordon Keown* (Morrow)*
An Irish spinster's cat is the re-incarnation of Nero. He goes to the "Bambeth" Conference, puts posers to the clergy, and comes to the conclusion that God is seldom in the Churches. Aside from the hackneyed nature-mysticism an amusing book.

CHARMIAN, LADY VIBART *by Jeffery Farnol* (Little, Brown)
A sequel, after twenty years, to *The Broad Highway*. Stirring adventure in Mr. Farnol's customary vein.

* All prices $2.00 except when followed by asterisk, in which case the price is $2.50.

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THE TENTH MOON *by Dawn Powell* (Farrar & Rinehart)
Moving story of artists in a small town, whose genius is too slight to carry them to success. Excellently done.

DESIRED HAVEN *by Henrietta Leslie* (Houghton, Mifflin)
The struggle of a musical genius to reach fulfilment in spite of the obstacle of his mother's hostility. Interesting but too sentimental.

THE SECOND SON *by Dominique Dunois* (Macaulay)
Peasant life in France, with an unwanted second son as hero, and the *Code Napoléon* as embodied in an old matriarch as the villain. Well done, and pleasantly exotic for Americans.

FABIAN *by Erich Kästner* (Dodd, Mead)*
Another novel about the spiritual chaos of modern Germany, with the familiar sad question mark of the defeatist at the end.

Short Stories

WOMEN AGAINST MEN *by Storm Jameson* (Knopf)*
Three honest and unsentimental stories about women by a woman who writes fine prose—*Delicate Monster, The Single Heart,* and *A Day Off*. Reviewed on page 86.

THE HEARTLESS LAND *by James Stern* (Macmillan)
The aftermath of Imperialism in Rhodesia gives Mr. Stern the setting for an interesting group of serious short stories. Reviewed on page 93.

THE HAUNTED MIRROR *by Elizabeth Madox Roberts* (Viking)*
Tales of simple people of the Kentucky mountains faced with love, death, and separation. Executed with genius. Reviewed last month.

THE PASTURES OF HEAVEN *by John Steinbeck* (Ballou)*
Loosely connected stories by a promising young novelist who contrasts the green pastures of Nature with the grey fortunes of humanity. Reviewed last month.

Detective and Mystery

MYSTERY AT THE JHC RANCH *by W. C. Tuttle* (Houghton, Mifflin)
After a train smash-up, Sad Sontag, the keen-eyed detective of the cow country, undertakes to solve the murder of cattleman Million Dollar Cleland and to bring to justice a group of rustlers that is preying on the ranchers. Good Western mystery-romance.

THE MYSTERY OF THE RABBIT'S PAW *by Selwyn Jepson* (Harpers)
Criminologist Peter Songe takes a busman's holiday at Ditcham Park to help out an old friend. William Passmore, scientist and research worker in the field of pituitary glands, is shot and suspicion falls on the members of Great House. Two leading questions: first, why was the large black rabbit killed? Second, what diabolical purpose was accomplished by the oatmeal biscuits?

THE BOX FROM JAPAN *by Harry Stephen Keeler* (Dutton)*
Mr. Keeler spins a longish yarn around a box purchased at an auction in Chicago in 1942 that leads the reader a merry chase through a maze of plots and counterplots for 765 pages. Using television as his *modus operandi*, he brings to us a London theatre performance, a revolution in Mexico, and for good measure there is a wave of murder, violence, and intrigue in Chicago.

MURDER OF THE LAWYER'S CLERK *by J. S. Fletcher* (Knopf)
Chaney and Camberwell, private inquiry agents, take on their fifth case as the result of a murder in Wrenchester. Typical Fletcher mystery using to best advantage the prerequisite qualities of his newly created sleuths.

ANONYMOUS FOOTSTEPS *by John M. O'Connor* (Cheshire House)
Five gory murders and a suicide on a snow-bound island in the Adirondacks practically wipe out the house of Larnard. The family skeleton in the closet is repeatedly dragged out and shaken to the sound of a buzzer that indicates another sudden death and establishes a perfect alibi for the monomaniac.

THOSE SEVEN ALIBIS *by Charles G. Booth* (Morrow)
A swell mystery story about the murder of an antique dealer in San Francisco over a beautiful stone head with an evil mouth, cut by Phidias. Smuggled out of Greece this ancient fragment arouses the cupidity of art collectors and leaves death in its wake. Agitated romance between two young people and suitable Oriental atmosphere provided by one Quon Lee, Chinese curio vendor.

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AT A GLANCE

Biography

MARIA THERESA OF AUSTRIA *by J. Alexander Mahan* (CROWELL. $3.75)

HERE is a lively and sympathetic portrait of the great Queen manœuvering among her allies, her enemies, and her sixteen children. Plainly stating at the outset that his book is for the uninformed reader, Dr. Mahan has done an astonishingly good job of popularizing history, though he oversimplifies. He writes so definitely from a nineteenth-century viewpoint that Maria Theresa's spirited little head seems frequently to be fitted into the bonnet of Queen Victoria.

FORTY YEARS FOR LABRADOR *by Sir Wilfred Grenfell* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. $4.00)

FORTY years of "low temperatures, high seas, and hard work" have not shaken the sunny-tempered doctor's faith in religion and the British Empire. This extended and revised autobiography, in which Sir Wilfred Grenfell has given a fuller account of his work in Labrador, is a tale of adventure at sea and social effort on land. The little hospital ship fights its way through darkness, fog, and crashing ice; its doctor fights the ignorance and poverty of the deep-sea fishermen who live along the Coast. To heal the individual he must heal the community, and coöperative stores, schools, and experimental farms bear witness to his ever-widening efforts. Each step forward is taken in the face of tremendous physical obstacles; the book is a succession of hair-raising episodes narrated with the terse cheerfulness of a born Victorian, who preserves confidence in himself and his surroundings no matter whether he is organizing a circulating library or hopelessly adrift on a flimsy ice-pan. It will delight not only sea lovers and sociologists but all Americans who secretly cherish the sentimentality of Charles Dickens.

ANNE BOLEYN *by E. Barrington* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.00)

THE second wife of Henry VIII is a perfect heroine for a novelized biography, and E. Barrington does her almost more than justice. There is little doubt that she was a scheming hussy. Her intriguing is skilfully blamed on her French upbringing and a French confidante; the Charybdis of her early love affair with Percy is admirably skirted. She is made beautiful and alluring, and the episodes centering about Anne's Revellers quicken the whole story with their youth and gaiety. If the figure of Thomas Wyatt scarcely lives up to the poetry he has left us, still his rôle in the book is not a joyous one, and it is a difficult task for anybody today to make a Tudor poet talk like one.

YONDER LIES ADVENTURE! *by E. Alexander Powell* (MACMILLAN. $3.00)

MR. POWELL is a professional traveller whose specialty it has been to be among those present upon notable occasions. Even Vesuvius was accommodating enough to erupt on his first journey to Sorrento. Corfu was his next stop, in time to coincide with King Edward on his way to attend the Olympic games at Athens where the author was also bound. And the King of Greece was there. It struck Mr. Powell as curious that he should be a Dane. He put on more airs than Edward. A New York policeman named Sheridan was the star of the games.

The author saw Constantinople in Abdul Hamid's day. A stay at the court of the Egyptian Khedive followed. It is pleasant to learn from this tourist that in calling on his highness "I took meticulous pains with my costume". So many American travellers are careless about clothes. More than this personal perfection "My dragoman, Major Aswad, in full uniform, with all his decorations, sat beside me, and Farez, in all his scarlet and gold glory, was perched be-

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side the coachman". It would appear that the ruler was the one honoured. Mr. Powell reprints this note from President Roosevelt to Secretary Robert Bacon of the State Department: "This will introduce E. Alexander Powell. He can ride anything on four legs. He is the kind of man we need in our diplomatic service. I want you to do something for him". Surely fame, as well as entertainment, enough for one life!

THE LIFE OF ANDREW CARNEGIE *by Burton J. Hendrick* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. 2 VOLS. $7.50)

THIS is, and beyond peradventure will continue to be, the "definitive" life of Andrew Carnegie. Mr. Hendrick has accumulated in the five years he has devoted to this task an enormous fund of new and important materials. He possesses in the bargain an indubitable gift for pertinent detail, for clear arrangement, and for those many qualities of characterization which taken in combination make for engaging biography. The author is to be remembered as a two-time Pulitzer prize winner in former years. His present book likewise is a definite contribution to the library of American biography.

Poetry

THE PRINCESS MARRIES THE PAGE *by Edna St. Vincent Millay* (HARPERS. $2.00)

THIS girlish and pleasantly romantic comedy was written by Miss Millay while she was an undergraduate at Vassar College. Although produced four times, the play (one act) has never before been published. The story is simple enough: a princess in love with a page meets him in a tower where she has gone to be alone and to read. It develops that the page is really a king, but a king in danger of his life. The princess protects the page, he turns out to be very noble and loyal, and in the end all is well for their young love. But the charm of the play lies in the completely accurate presentation of the characters, and in the wit and naïve imagination of these two extremely childlike lovers. Here dressed in royal robes is the spirit and charm of any sensitive girl, and, in disguise, the tentative boldness and quick fear of any well-bred young boy.

There is none of the irony of *Aria Da Capo*, but something of the same quality of fantasy. It is essentially a little idyll, a vignette designed to present very young love. Its colours are fresh and lovely, its details perfectly selected.

THE OXFORD BOOK OF SIXTEENTH CENTURY VERSE *chosen by E. K. Chambers* (OXFORD. $3.00)

SIR Edmund Chambers is an authority on Tudor-Stuart writings; his name on the title page always recommends a book to our attention. The present anthology ranges, to choose names at random, from Skelton to Fulke Greville to Sir John Davies, and where the output of a poet has been consistently on a high level he is generously represented. The only objection which one might make is that the high levels are too generously represented: Spenser, Shakespeare, and Marlowe are easily available in cheap editions and take space from men whom the average reader can meet only in anthologies of this kind—though that is not to say that Sir Edmund can be accused of any sins of omission. There is a tradition that an anthology shall be "representative", and considered from the viewpoint of that tradition this book could not be bettered.

THE GOLDEN BOOK OF ITALIAN POETRY *edited by Lauro de Bosis* (OXFORD. $2.50)

LAURO DE BOSIS, leader of the anti-Fascist Alleanza Nationale, died mysteriously a year ago after a flight over Rome during which he scattered pamphlets from his plane into the streets. His patriotism, which had taken so disastrous a form in partisan politics, was fundamentally a love for the glories of Italy. He was learned in the classics, and had lectured on Italian literature at Harvard, in his mother's country. For this reason, and perhaps also because his father was the translator of Shelley, he was eminently fitted to prepare for English readers this anthology of poetry in Italian with an excellent introduction in English, sketching

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the history of Italian literature. He left it with his publishers shortly before his death. It contains both lyrics, going back to St. Francis of Assisi, and sizeable quotations from the great narratives.

AMERICAN POETS, 1630–1930 *edited by Mark Van Doren* (LITTLE, BROWN. $3.75)

TO FOLLOW the main stream of American poetry from the viewpoint of today is the purpose of Mr. Van Doren's collection, and he has done his work with judgement and taste. In the relative space given to eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth century poetry he is in accord with the intelligent interests of our time. There will be radical disagreement about his choice of contemporaries, but the average reader will probably not complain of omissions and will be able to make his own rejections. The amount of space given to individual writers, and the inclusion of long poems is praiseworthy. This is an excellent book for anyone who wants to know what good poetry has been written in this country.

THE BEST POEMS OF 1932 *edited by Thomas Moult* (HARCOURT, BRACE. $2.00)

THIS is Mr. Moult's eleventh annual selection of poems published in magazines which justify more permanent accessibility. Perhaps the level of taste in verse is rising; this year's poems seem better than usual. The little volumes always make excellent gift or guest-room books; the decorations by Elizabeth Montgomery are charming.

Topics of the Day

CAN AMERICA STAY AT HOME? *by Frank H. Simonds.* (HARPERS. $3.00)

THIS narrative interpretation of American foreign policy since the outbreak of the World War proceeds rather laboriously to the gloomy conclusion that the United States can only check the fatal course of European anarchy and delay the inevitable European war by assuming responsibility for economic sanctions to implement the Pact of Paris. The author's frequently brilliant analysis of the various phases of conflict between isolationism and internationalism in America suffers from a lack of condensation. He is also open to some criticism for his journalistic habit of using without qualification events which may have been manifestations of domestic forces—such as the Republican victory of 1920—to support his premises. All in all, however, Mr. Simonds has achieved a stimulating review of our past and present place in world politics and a penetrating revelation of our changing political temper.

RUSSIA IN TRANSITION—A BUSINESS MAN'S APPRAISAL *by Elisha M. Friedman* (VIKING. $5.00)

THIS latest book on Russia, almost encyclopædic in scope, presents a mass of material on the political, economic, and psychological phenomena which go to make up the Soviet Union. The major portion of his six hundred pages the author devotes to linking past with present and surveying the Russian scene through perspectives as widely divergent as Hakluyt's *Voyages* and the policies of Secretary Stimson. The final chapters deal with American policies of recognition and include Mr. Friedman's advocacy of recognition *de facto* for the Soviet Union, conditioned upon their payment of Imperial Russian debts. In his conclusions, the author distinguishes himself by a rare willingness to forecast the political future of Russia. On the one hand, by the historical analogies of Cromwell and the French Revolution, he portrays the Kremlin régime facing a reaction and popular sovereignty; on the other he predicts that early recognition by the United States would have the same effect upon the Kremlin as did the election of the Labour Party upon the government in England—reduce it to conservatism. The work is well larded with tabulated data and the reader duly warned of frequent invalidity in comparisons with pre-War standards. A detailed analytical index is furnished as well as references by chapters to sources, persons, and subjects, in themselves a weighty bibliography of the Russian scene.

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CORRESPONDENCE

Sherlock Holmes

EDITOR, THE BOOKMAN;
SIR:

I wish you would tell Mr. Vincent Starrett how much pleasure I got from reading *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes.*

It was one of those articles that I thought of writing myself the minute I began to read what he had done.

Mr. Starrett noted a number of things that I would have missed, and omitted (perhaps wisely) one or two things that I would have put in.

For example, it always struck me as remarkable and delightful, that neither Holmes nor Watson ever seemed to have the slightest thought about whether business was good or not. There is no evidence that either felt depressed or alarmed when clients or patients were few, or that they exulted when demand for their services became brisk.

Was the Christian name of Dr. Watson ever revealed?

Very truly yours,
F. R. FELAND

Others interested in this perplexing problem will find our tentative answers to Mr. Feland's queries in *Chronicle and Comment* on page 58 of this issue.

Roy Campbell

EDITOR, THE BOOKMAN;
SIR:

The Christmas Number of THE BOOKMAN has been the delight of our whole family. We were particularly glad to make the acquaintance of Roy Campbell, who was quite new to us. Might I trouble you to ask whether you know what Mr. Campbell is working on at the present time, and what we may expect from him in the near future?

With renewed thanks for a most unusual and attractive Christmas number, I am

Sincerely,
(Mrs.) ALICE T. QUACKENBUSH

Roy Campbell is the young South African poet about whom Mr. Arthur Colton wrote in the CHRISTMAS BOOKMAN. He has just published in England a prose work on bullfighting called *Taurine Provence* (Desmond Harmsworth)—a rich collection of personal notes on both the formal Spanish *corrida* and the specifically Provençal bull games in which the bull himself is raised to a plane of almost magical significance. Like Mr. Hemingway's *Death in the Afternoon*, with which it has been compared abroad, it contains animadversions on unrelated literary subjects, and apparently very fiery ones.

Publishers

EDITOR, THE BOOKMAN;
SIR:

In the November issue of THE BOOKMAN Mr. Thames Williamson expresses his dissatisfaction with publishers in general in an article entitled "Are Publishers Feeble-Minded?" Mr. Williamson has tried in his comparatively short career at least five American publishers, and none of them have met his exacting requirements which include among other things an efficient post office department for the forwarding of his mail all over the globe. *Ergo:* Publishers are a hopeless lot.

However, I am particularly concerned only with the section of the article dealing with the publishers of *Hunky*. If the other parts of Mr. Williamson's article are as inaccurate as those dealing with *Hunky*, he must set some sort of record for even disgruntled authors. In two short paragraphs Mr. Williamson manages to make

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four absolutely incorrect statements, apart from the cheapness of his personal allusion.

He writes: "My agent and I managed to persuade him [the editor] to accept the story [*Hunky*]". The editor never saw Mr. Williamson after the manuscript came in or received any letter from him urging the publication of *Hunky*, and Mr. Williamson's agent made no attempt at persuasion whatever, only asking that a decision be expedited. That Mr. Williamson was satisfied with the attitude of the house is shown by a letter he wrote to the editor saying, "I am deeply pleased at your attitude toward it".

The author goes on: "On her own initiative—or so I am told [by whom?]—a girl in the publisher's office sent the story to the Book-of-the-Month Club". The book was sent in the regular routine as were all books with any possible Book Club chances and the initiative of "some girl" had nothing whatever to do with it.

Mr. Williamson speaks of "an admittedly mistaken sales policy". This on the face of it is ridiculous. What publisher's sales policies are ever "admittedly" mistaken? As a matter of fact, the only mistake in the sales policy was the overenthusiasm of the Sales Department which loaded the bookstores to an extent that proved embarrassing when the public showed an unfortunate indifference to Mr. Williamson's book.

Mr. Williamson goes on: "So I quit, leaving the squash champion [the editor and present writer] suddenly loud and bitter in his denunciation of ungrateful authors". If I have ever indulged in that reputed pastime of publishers, it has never been to denounce Mr. Williamson. When we parted company, my interest in him was slight. I had no belief that his books would make money (for once not feeble-minded as the subsequent record proved) and our relationship had not been close enough for me to take any personal affront. Incidentally, Mr. Williamson gives the impression that he quit in a lordly manner like a highly-prized cook giving sudden notice. By contract he was compelled to offer us another book and it was entirely up to the writer whether he should be allowed to go at that time.

However, I admit the impeachment implied in the title of Mr. Williamson's article—not because I happened to have been a "squash champion" or a "boy editor"—(just four years younger than Mr. Williamson)—but because I paid Mr. Williamson considerably more than twice as much for his share of the Book Club sale than I was obligated to pay through a strict interpretation of our contract with him. Feeble-minded? No—Mr. Williamson is charitable.

—(EX) SQUASH CHAMPION

* * *

EDITOR, THE BOOKMAN;
SIR:

In your November issue, you print an incorrect statement of fact in an article by Thames Williamson. He says as to his book, *Hunky*, "A girl . . . in the publisher's office sent the story to the Book-of-the-Month Club. There it lay around unnoticed—so I am told again—until the wife of a member of the Club's jury, trying to pass the time while waiting for her husband, picked it up, read it, liked it and called it to the attention of the committee. Result—a Book-of-the-Month Club selection".

Mr. Williamson and THE BOOKMAN, before printing and circulating such "so-I-am-tolds" should, it seems, take the primary journalistic precaution of checking up on their accuracy. It is a shame to puncture an amusing story, but unfortunately, books do not lie around here unnoticed for wives of judges to read in idle moments. Submitted books go through an extremely careful sorting out process, and there are at least half a dozen people, aside from anxious publishers, engaged in seeing that they are not unnoticed.

Hunky went through this careful system. It was passed and recommended to the attention of our judges, not by the wife of any of them, but by our usual preliminary readers; a separate copy went to each one of the judges; the book was discussed at length at their regular monthly meeting; and it was finally chosen, the present title being given to it, because the one under which it was submitted, as I recollect, seemed to have no relation at all to the book's content. (This change, of course, was made with the author's consent.)

I hope, for your readers' sake, Mr. Williamson's other "so-I-am-tolds" have a better basis in fact.

Yours very truly,

HARRY SCHERMAN

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ABOUT BOOK-COLLECTING

by Wilfred Partington

The First American Newspaper and the "New England Primer"

London, December.

NOTES AND QUERIES, which has just been celebrating its eighty-third birthday, has been publishing a series of informative contributions by Mr. J. G. Muddiman under the title of *Benjamin Harris, the First American Journalist*—a title which is somewhat misleading. *Notes and Queries,* by the bye, came out originally under the admirable Dickensian motto, "When found, make a note of"; the motto was abandoned, as were many excellent things, in the post-War upheaval. Whatever the explanation of dropping the famous sub-title, I propose to follow the motto, and make a note here of Benjamin Harris because I agree with Mr. Muddiman's suggestion that Harris's career in America, although it has been written about in recent years, still needs investigation.

Harris was a bookseller in London about the years 1670 to 1673; and about the year 1679 he moved to larger premises under the Royal Exchange, and launched out also as a printer. Then his life became highly exciting, for he was mixed up in the subterranean politics of the Popish and Rye House Plots, printing a number of more or less scandalous news-sheets and pamphlets, most of which underwent bewildering changes of name until they were dropped like hot bricks, or suppressed. In the course of this part of his career he was arraigned for printing, selling, and publishing seditious and false news. He was put in the pillory before his own shop-door, fined £500, and imprisoned for over a year—when he was released after writing a Micawber-like petition to Charles the Second.

But I pass over this curious tale of political feuds and the old fight between parliament and King, to come to Harris's American associations. The first concerns that historic little book, so famous in American history, *The New England Primer,* which Mr. Paul Leicester Ford (in his work published in 1897) attributed in the first instance to Benjamin Harris. Of this theory Mr. Muddiman says:

> I notice, however, that later American writers are inclined to doubt this, chiefly because the earliest known surviving copy of the *Primer* is dated 1727. [Harris is believed to have died in 1720.] There seems to be room therefore for further research on this subject, and this can only be carried out by American writers. But I may as well point out that two later booklets published by Harris may possibly throw a little light on the subject. They are signed by his initials, "B. H.", and, though they have not

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been hitherto credited to him, also bear his imprint. They are: *The Fables of Young Æsop.* Written by B. H. Fourth edition, 1700 (with 40 very curious cuts); and *Three Sermons Preached in Scotland*, 1700 (which Harris says in his Preface were taken down by a girl of thirteen).

The other association arises out of Harris's visit to America, after taking refuge in Holland following the defeat of the Duke of Monmouth, the illegitimate son of Charles the Second. The refugee arrived in Boston, Massachusetts, in the fall of 1686, accompanied by Vavasour Harris, probably his son. His flair for starting "newes-papers"—it is to him we owe the word—soon asserted itself. On Thursday, September the 25th, 1690, he produced No. 1 of *Public Occurrences, Both Foreign and Domestick* (Printed by A. Pierce for Benjamin Harris, at the London Coffee House, Boston). This is generally accepted as the first American newspaper.

The publication, a folio sheet (four pages), was immediately suppressed because of two passages—the one, accusing Louis XIV of incest; the other, containing a story of a body of Indians revolting to the Maquas and being massacred by the French. Once again Harris was in trouble for publishing alleged false "newes". Four years later he returned to old England to resume (the Royal prerogative in the printing of news being abandoned) his activities in the Whig cause.

But was Benjamin Harris's *Public Occurrences* really the first American newspaper? I recall that eleven years ago, when editing a London journal, a dispute was referred to me by Mr. Thomas T. Keightly, of New York, as to what was the first American newspaper; one of the parties to the dispute having claimed it to be *The Boston News Letter* of 1704. In reply I cited, of course, Harris's *Public Occurrences, Both Foreign and Domestick* (1690), of which the only known copy appears to be that in the Record Office, London. But looking into the matter, I found something else to "make a note of". Father Benjamin and son Vavasour did justice to the "Domestick" news without resorting to frills and streamers. These were the items which caught my eye:—

At Watertown, an old man, having recently buried his wife and fallen into a melancholy, hanged himself.

The small-pox which has been raging in Boston, now much abated.

There was a great fire a few weeks since in Boston with twenty houses near the Millcreek burned.

Two English captives escaped from the Indians and French at Pescadamoquady came into Portsmouth on the 16th inst. and relate an account of the barbarities exercised at Port Real by Capt. Mason upon the Indians, who in revenge butchered forty of our people who were captives.

Another fire in Boston on the 17th inst. . . . the best furnished printing press in America destroyed also, a loss not easily repaired.

If a newcomer like Benjamin Harris, an experienced printer and publisher, could describe another Boston printing-press as the best furnished in America, might it not have produced an earlier (if perhaps more "Domestick") news-sheet? If it did, all trace is lost unless a copy is still lurking undiscovered, bound up in some old book or lying among the papers of some unsuspecting American—historic treasure. However this may be, further research into both Benjamin Harris's career in America and the origin of the *New England Primer* might well be undertaken in the light of the hints suggested.

SEQUEL TO A RUSSIAN ADVENTURE

In the last Number of the *Colophon*, which is more varied and colourful than ever, there is one contribution of particular interest. This

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is *My Russian Adventure* by Percy H. Muir, who describes the enterprise of a little group of London booksellers in going to Russia (after long and trying negotiations with the Soviet Government) with the aim of buying up some of the great private libraries confiscated by the Republic. The terribly pathetic condition of these libraries, the description of their wealth, the Gilbertian comedy of the mission's efforts to bargain with the Soviet officials—these things make an absorbing story. It was a costly and in many ways an arduous enterprise; and there is no concealment of the dismay of the adventurers when they found themselves balked at every turn in their efforts to capture some of the libraries for dispersal in London.

In the *Colophon* Mr. Muir leaves his story there. The sequel was forthcoming when I called recently to take afternoon tea with him and his fellow-directors, Dr. A. W. Evans and the Hon. R. E. Gathorne-Hardy (Elkin Mathews, Ltd.). Over a Gargantuan black tea-pot which would have brought joy to the heart of Dr. Johnson, Mr. Muir told me that the difficult and diffident Soviet officials did eventually allow the sale of one very small collection; and so the bookmen returned to London—if not loaded with bibliophilic treasures such as they had dreamed of, at least with sufficient to cover the cost of an annoying yet amusing adventure.

The whole episode is a remarkable illustration of our eventful life and times—of the amazing upheaval in Russia, with its ruined palaces and silent and neglected libraries. It is well that such an affecting record has been made in the *Colophon*. It has been known for a long time that the Soviet cared little for the country's literary and art treasures; and that these vast hordes of confiscated wealth—in which English, French, and German books and MSS were well represented—were for

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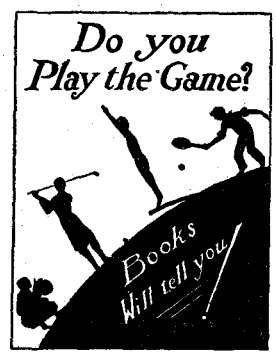

THERE'S plenty of information in all bookshops on the subject of sport—all types and kinds. Rules, history, and instruction—you will find them in the bookstores.
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sale. A part of this seized property has found its way to London and Berlin, some of it in transit, doubtless, for America. But I gather from other sources that, probably owing to political manipulations, the Germans have been more successful in nailing down the curious Russians and securing the collections.

A COLLECTOR AND AN AUTOGRAPH

Mr. Michael John Ryan, a solicitor and well-known collector, went into a Dublin antiquarian bookshop, where he had been for years a customer. He was shown a copy of Dodsley's *Collection of Poems by Several Hands*. This copy was inscribed on the fly-leaf: "Memorandum. This Book was given to me by my Uncle, Dr. Oliver Goldsmith, the friend of Johnson, of Reynolds, and of Burke, and the Author, *The Deserted Village* —Henry Goldsmith, Louisbourgh, Cape Breton. 1781." On the top right-hand corner of the title-page was written "O. Goldsmith". On the page containing the opening verse of *The Vanity of Human Wishes* by Samuel Johnson was written: "Read this fine Poem carefully and often. I admire it the more since I have had the honour of knowing its author.—O. G."

Mr. Ryan paid $125 (par) for the copy. Later, being doubtful of the autographs after examining them with the specimens in Temple Scott's work on Oliver Goldsmith, he sent the book to the Manuscript Department of the British Museum, whose Deputy Keeper, Dr. Robin Flower, returned it, stating that the inscriptions were spurious. The result of the transaction was a claim by Mr. Ryan against the booksellers, Messrs. Hanna and Son, of Dublin, for alleged fraudulent misrepresentation in the sale of the volume. The firm denied that they knew the book was "wrong"; and in the result the case was settled by the booksellers paying $125 (par) damages and costs.

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